



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

National inspection in respect of the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services

June 2013

1 Introduction

1.1 This report provides details of the findings of an inspection, by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, into how different organisational structures and models of delivery impact upon, the fulfilment of, the role of the Statutory Director Social Services.

1.2 This inspection was carried out in accordance with the provisions of chapter 6 of part 2 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 and Parts I and II of the Care Standards Act.

Background

1.3 The statutory guidance on the role and accountabilities of the Director of Social Services was issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 and published in June 2009. This guidance set out a clear statutory basis for Local Authority Social Services functions and for the appointment of a Director of Social Services, stressing the importance of clear accountability arrangements to Councillors and for all staff engaged/employed in delivering Social Services functions; both those directly accountable to the Director, as well as those not in a direct line management relationship.

1.4 The purpose of the guidance is significant as it:

- i. clarifies and underpins the responsibility and accountability for Social Services within the council;
- ii. provides a stronger framework to support improvement within which inspection takes place; and
- iii. provides a stronger foundation for Social Services to contribute to corporate arrangements for reporting improvement.

1.5 The guidance reiterates the requirement of Section 6 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, that each Local Authority 'establish a statutory post of Director of Social Services for the purposes of their Social Services functions'. Assembly Government Guidance on Executive and Alternative arrangements 2006, set out 6 core responsibilities of the Director across all the authority's Social Service functions.

1.6 Delivering on these core responsibilities was deemed necessary for the effective discharge of functions. Failure to discharge these appropriately would result in an authority being in default of its statutory duties. These core responsibilities are as follows:

- i. providing clear professional leadership across Social Services;
- ii. having direct access to and advising the Chief Executive and Councillors on Social Services matters and on the direction and actions the authority should take in fulfilling its Social Services responsibilities;
- iii. ensuring that strong performance management arrangements are in place across Social Services, and reporting at a corporate level and to Councillors on the authority's performance;
- iv. ensuring that the authority has proper safeguards to protect vulnerable children and young people, adults and older people, and reporting at a corporate level and to Councillors on their effectiveness;
- v. fulfilling overall responsibility for Social Services workforce planning, training and professional development; and
- vi. ensuring that there are adequate arrangements in place for Social Services to work effectively with others, both within and outside the authority, in fulfilling its Social Services functions and in contributing to the achievement of wider policy objectives.

1.7 Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities 2007 set out the vision for Social Services in Wales and confirmed the Welsh Assembly Government's continued requirement that every Council appoint a Director of Social Services with responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the authority's Social Services functions. (As described in schedule 1 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.)

1.8 At the time of the publication of the statutory guidance on the role and accountabilities of the Statutory Director, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Mrs Gwenda Thomas, announced that the Care Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) would undertake an inspection of the arrangements.

The Inspection

1.9 In 2011 CSSIW designed a self assessment improvement tool (SAIT) against the Statutory Director's accountabilities and all councils were asked to complete this self evaluation and reflect on the arrangements they had adopted to support compliance. The self assessment was based on the following five chapters of the statutory guidance. Authorities were asked to evaluate themselves against descriptors drawn from detail contained within the guidance:

- i. statutory requirement to designate a Director of Social Services;
- ii. accountability within the council;
- iii. reciprocal relationships;
- iv. reporting performance, improvement and scrutiny; and the
- v. recommended competencies for appointment as Director of Social Services.

1.10 Authorities were asked to confirm that the completed assessment represented the agreed view of the Head of Paid Service, the lead member(s) for Social Services and the statutory Director of Social Services. The self assessment in itself therefore, was designed to raise the profile of the role of the Statutory Director within local authorities and provide an opportunity for officers and councillors to review the effectiveness of their implementation of the guidance.

1.11 Twenty one authorities returned the self assessment. The quality of the returns and the evidence provided was variable. Some of the responses were comprehensive and self analytical. Others were much less rigorous and were unable to evidence a genuinely reflective process, therefore raising questions about the priority given to the process.

Core Accountabilities

1.12 The authorities' self assessment of compliance against the Statutory Director's core responsibilities completed 2011/2012, identified that:

- i. all authorities had met the statutory requirement to designate a Director of Social Services;
- ii. authorities were generally confident in their arrangements and improvement areas largely related to the outdated governance documents;
- iii. most authorities assessed themselves as having undertaken substantial and mostly successful work towards meeting the requirements of the guidance; and that
- iv. some authorities viewed these arrangements as more well embedded supporting Social Services performance in pursuit of the objectives of Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities.

1.13 The findings from these self assessments were used to inform the 2011/2012 CSSIW annual analysis of Social Services performance.

1.14 The statutory guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services 2009 states that:

“ It is for Councils to determine the management arrangements for services which best meet their needs. The aim of this Guidance is to ensure that these arrangements do enable the accountabilities of the Director of Social Services to be effectively discharged. ”

Therefore it was decided that the CSSIW inspection would explore the question of how,

“ Different organisational structures and models of delivery put in place across Wales impact upon, the fulfilment of, the role of the Statutory Director Social Services. ”

1.15 The seven authorities included in the fieldwork inspection were chosen to reflect different structural arrangements.

- i. Three authorities could be described as ‘Single Social Services Directorate’ in that they had located both adults and children’s Social Service functions in one directorate reporting to the Statutory Director of Social Services.
- ii. One authority had single directorate arrangements as described above, but the designated Statutory Director also undertook this function in relation to a neighbouring authority.
- iii. Three authorities could be described as ‘dual’ directorates in that Social Services functions were located across more than one directorate. In two of these authorities the Statutory Director had no line management of children services while in the third authority the designated Director had no line management of adult services.

1.16 For the purposes of the fieldwork inspection the structural arrangements were considered against the following issues:

- i. the authority of the role of the Statutory Director had been negotiated formalised and communicated;
- ii. capacity had been made available to enable the Statutory Director of Social Services to fulfill the core accountabilities of the role;
- iii. the Statutory Director Social Services had access to the Head of Paid Service and Councillors;
- iv. reciprocal arrangements were in place between the Director of Social Services and other senior officers within the council to enable the necessary fulfillment of the accountabilities vested in the post holder; and

- v. the Head of Paid Service was able to satisfy themselves that the arrangements supported the Statutory role of the Director of Social Services.

2 Executive summary

2.1 This report provides details of the findings and evaluation of an inspection, by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, into how different organisational structures and models of delivery impact upon, the fulfilment of, the role of the Statutory Director Social Services. The field work for this inspection was undertaken in December 2012 in seven local authorities across Wales. These findings also reference information provided through an earlier self assessment on the role and accountabilities of the Director of Social Services completed by all but one of the local authorities in Wales.

2.2 The guidance on the role and accountabilities of the Director of Social Services was produced as a consequence of the findings emerging from the then Social Services Inspectorate for Wales’ programme of Inspections and Joint Reviews. These had shown a considerable variation in the Social Services performance of the twenty two local authorities in Wales and, in some cases, found that their performance gave rise to serious concern. The work of the then Social Services Inspectorate for Wales also identified the key features of the better performing authorities. These included:

- i. strong and clear political leadership which recognised the authority’s Social Services responsibilities;
- ii. corporate commitment to ensuring that the authority fulfilled those responsibilities; and
- iii. visible and strong leadership from the Director of Social Services.

2.3 In these authorities, it was apparent that the Director of Social Services played a crucial role in securing the essential political and corporate support for Social Services and provided effective service and performance management, a clear sense of strategic direction, professional leadership for the staff and for services and fostered good joint working with partners both within and outside the authority.

2.4 It was necessary therefore for the significance of the role of Director of Social Services to be understood fully by local authorities in Wales and for each of them to have in place arrangements that enabled their Director to fulfil their responsibilities to the full. The statutory guidance provides the basis for authorities to deliver their responsibilities.

2.5 At the time of the publication of the statutory guidance on the role and accountabilities of the Statutory Director, it was announced that the Care Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) would undertake an inspection of the arrangements.

Overall Findings

2.6 The inspections concluded that no one structural configuration appeared to confer significant advantages in terms of its effectiveness in supporting or securing the role of the Statutory Director. However there were some that made fulfilment of the accountabilities more difficult.

2.7 Although there is evidence from across Wales of authorities undertaking steps to develop responses to the guidance concerning the role of the Statutory Director adherence to guidance and the effectiveness of these arrangements has been variable.

2.8 Where arrangements did not fully reflect the statutory guidance the Director appeared to be meeting their accountabilities despite the corporate arrangements rather than as a consequence of them.

2.9 In the best examples, authorities had explicitly negotiated the delineation of responsibilities between key post holders, including the Head of the Paid Service.

2.10 Whilst all authorities had developed responses to the guidance, it was of concern that in some cases, the authority and influence of the Statutory Director was not in fact commensurate with their key 'indivisible accountabilities'. In these cases it was difficult to see how, in the event of the need to challenge the authority concerning its effective discharge of Social Service functions, the Statutory Director was in fact empowered to do so.

2.11 The Head of Paid Service has a pivotal role in empowering the designated Director of Social Services and in ensuring that the corporate infrastructure supports them with their statutory accountabilities.

2.12 In too many examples, the stability and effectiveness of the role appeared to rely too heavily on the personal standing of the individual, rather than being appropriately underpinned by a clear and explicitly negotiated protocol.

2.13 The resilience of authorities in relation to the professional leadership aspects of the Statutory Director role presents questions as to long term sustainability. This is particularly evident where the Statutory Director has relatively little direct experience as a Social Care professional and therefore, inevitably relies on someone at a Head of Service level to provide professional expertise.

2.14 There is a need to raise awareness amongst Councillors concerning the role of the Statutory Director. This includes the totality of the role and how Councillors can both support the role and hold post holders to account more transparently.

2.15 The Director's accountabilities in relation to both safeguarding and workforce whilst highly valued was not always explicitly understood in relation to the delegated functions of other officers and partners. The parameters of the accountabilities of the Statutory Director need to be clearly negotiated and communicated to Councillors, officers and partners. They should not be seen as absolving others from meeting their own responsibilities.

2.16 Where corporate performance systems were well developed these supported the Director to maintain more reliable oversight of the totality of Social Services. Overall quality assurance mechanisms appeared less well embedded.

Recommendations

2.17 Regardless of any structural arrangement the Director of Social Services should always be a member of the Corporate Management Team and have direct access to the Head of Paid Service and to Councillors.

2.18 The relationship between the Head of Paid Service and that of the Statutory Director of Social Services needs to be explicitly negotiated and appropriately communicated to Councillors, officers and partners. This needs to be underpinned in governance and delegation documents that should be subject to periodic review.

2.19 Authorities would benefit from investing time in negotiating a clear understanding of the responsibilities and accountabilities of all Officers in respect of the interface between the Director of Social Services' accountabilities and leadership role with other officers' delegated functions.

2.20 Authorities need to ensure that formal protocols are in place that clearly set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Director and Councillors.

2.21 Authorities would benefit from developing protocols across other directorates reflecting the interface with the Director's role, particularly in respect of safeguarding.

2.22 The interface of accountabilities would benefit from complementary statutory guidance being issued for example on the role of the Lead Director and that of other Corporate Directors. This should include a reporting framework that is comparable to and compatible with that expected of the Statutory Director of Social Services.

2.23 To secure strong, effective and robust scrutiny arrangements, scrutiny Councillors need additional support, training and skills to enable them to fully understand Social Services and provide appropriate challenge. Local authorities supported by the WLGA, need to consider how they can secure the necessary consistency and quality of scrutiny of Social Services across all councils.

2.24 As the guidance does not detail or provide a role profile for Officers and partners in relation to the role and accountabilities of the Statutory Director, authorities should invest time in developing these expectations for themselves and review the effectiveness of these reciprocal arrangements on a regular basis.

2.25 Any new or revised guidance will need to take account of the integration and regionalisation agenda being taken forward by local authorities. However, this should act to support rather than dilute the Statutory Director of Social Services core accountabilities to their employing Social Services authority.

3 The Authority of the Role of the Statutory Director

3.1 The advantages of some organisational structures for the fulfilment of the role of Statutory Director Social Services were not always immediately apparent. However, the inspection found that all authorities recognised the statutory guidance and most had put systems and organisational features in place that supported the Director of Social Services in fulfilling the accountabilities of the role.

3.2 The structural arrangements were such that the majority of Directors of Social Services were members of the Corporate Management Team and had direct access to the Head of Paid Service and to Councillors, as required by guidance. However, in a small number of authorities these arrangements had either only just begun to be introduced or were still the subject of review.

3.3 Despite some common features, the extent to which the Statutory Director's authority to fulfill the core accountabilities of the role had been negotiated, formalised and communicated, was very variable. The inspection identified examples of positive and also less well embedded arrangements across single, dual and integrated service configurations.

Common Issues

Scope of Role

3.4 Most organisational structures contained layers of complexity and this was reflected in the additional statutory duties, operational responsibilities or corporate remit that was also associated with the role of designated Statutory Director post holders. The rationale for some of these corporate arrangements was not always clear or understood across the organisation.

3.5 In some instances leadership responsibilities, including that of the designated Social Services Director, had been relocated for practical reasons (e.g. staff changes) and reflected confidence in a particular individual rather than the logical consequence of a negotiated organisational structure. Integration of the service with other agencies and the development of regional collaborations have added to the complexity of leadership responsibilities and accountabilities.

3.6 The roles located with the designated Director of Social Services varied between authorities and included such combinations as:

- i. Lead Director Children and Young People.
- ii. Director Education.
- iii. Director Social Services/Social Care.

There were also combinations of:

- iv. Health, Housing, Community Safety, Leisure.
- v. Head of Service Adults.

3.7 Authorities were not always able to identify the risks and benefits of locating the span of responsibilities in one officer or how these affected their ability to deliver their Statutory Social Services accountabilities. In some authorities the emphasis appeared to be on promoting a chosen structural arrangement and demonstrating that the Director's accountabilities can be made to fit this, through the development of a plethora of complex arrangements, rather than taking the accountabilities of the Director as the starting point.

Governance Documents

3.8 An effective governance framework should provide a systematic approach to the delegation of authority, formalised in writing. This underpinning document should explicitly delineate roles, responsibilities, relationships with other Chief Officers and the parameters of decision making powers. Overarching governance documents such as the constitution are not an end in themselves and so do not need to contain all the detail. They should, however, include statutory responsibilities and conflict resolution procedures.

3.9 In the national self assessment authorities had reported that overarching governance documents set out how Social Services accountabilities are arranged. However, a number had qualified this to say that such documents still needed to be reviewed to explicitly reflect the statutory guidance or to take account of recent internal structural changes. This suggests that some authorities believed that their pre-existing documentation sufficiently reflected the statutory responsibilities, but that they were yet to be explicitly negotiated to respond to the more recent guidance.

3.10 These findings were echoed during the field work in the 7 authorities as although all authorities had set out underlying governance arrangements in their constitution, not all of these made specific reference to the distinct role of the Statutory Director.

3.11 The three authorities that had formal 'dual' arrangements had, as required by guidance, developed additional written framework documents setting out 'Responsibilities and lines of accountability that the council have put in place to ensure all aspects of Social Services can be managed'. Although some authorities had begun to develop a similar document, this type of protocol is not required in guidance in a 'single Social Services' structure because there appears to be an underlying assumption that the line management arrangements secure the Director of Social Services' ability to deliver against their accountabilities automatically, as a consequence of the structure. Given the span of authority and the need for collaboration across other parts of the authority e.g. safe recruitment, this assumption now needs to be reviewed. The best of the protocols detailed officers' responsibilities

in very practical terms and explicitly stated how the reporting arrangements would work both at a corporate and an operational level and included a conflict resolution protocol. Authorities would benefit from extending these protocols across other directorates reflecting the interface with the Director's role.

3.12 The development of these protocols helped to provide additional levels of confidence amongst Members, officers and partners regarding the Director's role. However, their existence did not ensure absolute clarity and the protocols were only as effective as the systems put in place to negotiate, communicate and deliver the arrangements.

Negotiation and Communication

3.13 The inspection recognised that organisations are subject to continual change. All the field work authorities had for example undergone changes of Councillors and portfolio holders following the local election and most had also experienced changes at senior officer level. A number of authorities had temporary arrangements in place.

3.14 The guidance had ensured that regardless of the structural configuration, the role of the Director of Social Services was recognised and the Director's Annual Report had become part of each authority's planning cycle.

3.15 Some training on the role of the Statutory Director was provided to Members and Scrutiny Committees, However, the degree to which Councillors felt they understood the role was very variable depending on their experience and the contact they had with the post holder. Members, officers and partners interviewed were cognisant of the statutory guidance, but as they had often inherited the delegations that were already in place most had not been involved in any detailed discussion of the interface between roles to ensure:

- i. a shared understanding of respective roles and accountabilities; and
- ii. clarity of reporting arrangements.

3.16 Key themes from the fieldwork.

- i. In most authorities Social Services was viewed as having an established corporate profile by Members, officers and partners; this was often due to the known risks associated with the service particularly in relation to potential budget pressures and safeguarding.
- ii. In the fieldwork authorities it was reported that the 'Director of Social Services remains the senior officer within the Council with final and indivisible accountability for safeguarding'. However, officers and Councillors had not always determined the detail of what this meant in practice for their authority. There was greater awareness of the complexity of these responsibilities following the issues which had been highlighted in the CSSIW and ESTYN report **Joint investigation into the handling and management of allegations of professional abuse and the arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education services in Pembrokeshire County Council 2011**. It is perhaps relevant to reflect that most authorities across Wales, some more so than others, identified additional work they needed to undertake to clarify and implement the respective safeguarding responsibilities of the Director Social Services and the Director of Education following publication of the above report.
- iii. Understanding of the reciprocal arrangements often appeared based on 'custom and practice' and authorities did not routinely invest time in evaluating the effectiveness of their arrangements and even where changes were made to delegations, reporting arrangements were not always well communicated.
- iv. Those authorities with 'dual' services had clearly needed to undertake additional work when they adopted their structural arrangements to ensure that the Director was able to retain final and indivisible accountability for Social Care Services. The Director's dependence on effective reciprocal arrangements was found to be particularly susceptible to staff changes in these authorities and this, in some instances, had affected the clarity of the reporting arrangements.

- v. Overall, the role of the Lead Director, often located with the Director of Education, was not well understood and not always known to some officers.
 - vi. The interface of accountabilities would benefit from complementary statutory guidance being issued for example on the role of the Lead Director and that of other Corporate Directors including a similar reporting framework.
 - vii. Any new or revised guidance will need to take account of the integration and regionalisation agenda being taken forward by local authorities. However this agenda does not dilute the Statutory Director Social Services core accountabilities.
- ii. the authority attributed to the Statutory Director was often person centred rather than viewed as embedded in the organisational arrangements; and
 - iii. the confidence that officers, councillors and partners had in the professional or personal ability of the Director of Social Services, enabled them to exercise their authority more effectively.

3.20 The role of the Statutory Director was generally respected because of the accountabilities they managed. The statutory guidance was also viewed as important as it set out the expectations of the role and it was reported as a helpful underpinning document.

3.21 In a few authorities with more complex arrangements, the Director had explicitly used the statutory guidance to raise the profile of Social Services and to promote structural change. However, in contrast to other governance arrangements established within the local authority (e.g. in relation to the role of the 151 Officer), where the exercise of the function is seen as the appropriate exercise of authority, in the case of the Statutory Director, the need to explicitly invoke the statutory guidance was often viewed negatively, both by Statutory Directors and by other senior officers.

3.22 The reasons for this seemed to be because it implied that the collaborative arrangements in place were not working or that it would have the effect of conferring greater authority on the Director than other Senior Officers. The ability of the Statutory Director to exercise their authority was therefore, often dependant on their own interpersonal skills, their own confidence in the role and most importantly in the degree of support afforded to them by the Head of Paid Service. Conversely, it should follow from the purpose of the statutory guidance that where it appears to the Statutory Director that the collaborative arrangements have not been successful in securing the primary objectives associated with a Council's social care and safeguarding functions, it is to the benefit of the Council and its citizens that the Head of the Paid Service is so advised.

Authority of the Role

3.17 The expectation of guidance is that the 'Director of Social Services has a sufficient level of seniority to discharge the authority's Social Services functions and delivery their accountabilities; and this authority is well understood by relevant Officers and Members'.

3.18 Directors were often said to be able to discharge their accountabilities because of the 'respect' and 'trust' they commanded in others. These are significant features of leadership but the risks associated with an over reliance on 'good working relationships', 'trust' and informal arrangements rather than clear and effective governance, are well known and are often exposed when an authority experiences a significant pressure or crisis. It was clear to inspectors that in more than one council, the role of the Director of Social Services was significantly restricted and this meant that the post holder had insufficient authority and influence.

3.19 The 'authority' afforded to the Director Social Services was often found to be dependant on:

- i. the direction set by the Head of Paid Service and members. Where the Head of Paid Service maintained a strong oversight of arrangements and Social Services was viewed as a corporate priority, then the Director was better supported by corporate structures and collaborative arrangements were more secure;

3.23 The guidance states that the Director of Social Services retains final and indivisible accountability for the quality and delivery of Social Care Services and they bear an obligation to keep the Head of Paid Service involved. However, part of the Head of Paid Service reciprocal responsibilities is:

“the management and leadership of all Directors and chief officers and for creating the conditions, in which others can perform, innovate and provide leadership within their service. This should include ensuring that roles, responsibilities and reciprocal arrangements are formally negotiated and regularly updated to reflect and support the Statutory Director to discharge their accountabilities.”

4 The capacity available to enable the Statutory Director of Social Services to fulfill the core accountabilities of the role

4.1 The national self assessment and the inspection fieldwork highlighted that most authorities, including both ‘dual’ or ‘single’ directorate models, felt confident in their arrangements and believed that the structural configurations adopted ensured the capacity of the Director of Social Services to meet their responsibilities.

4.2 During the fieldwork inspection officers and Councillors were able to describe the particular advantages of their own structures.

In ‘dual’ model directorates this often included:

- i. raised profile of Social Services and breaking down silo working;
- ii. shared delivery of the Social Services agenda across directorates: and

- iii. two senior officers attending Corporate Management Team promoting Social Services.

In single directorate structures the advantages were reported as:

- i. the ability of the Statutory Director to influence the strategic direction, vision and operational delivery of the totality of Social Services and to advise the political leadership as needed: and
- ii. synergy across adult and children services.

4.3 In three authorities it had been recognised that the arrangements in place were less secure in that the complexity of the structure acted to potentially impede the Director from meeting their accountabilities. In two authorities the reporting arrangements were not compliant with guidance as the Director was not or had only recently become a member of the Corporate Management Team. In one instance the Statutory Director reporting arrangements were to someone other than the Head of Paid Service. This meant that Directors, although providing visible leadership, were managing this despite the corporate arrangements rather than as a consequence of them. In the third authority, although there was clear governance in place it was recognised that adapting to a temporary arrangement, of sharing one Director across two authorities, had placed a strain on the organisation. All of these arrangements were being reviewed.

Common Features

4.4 Regardless of structural arrangements given the span of responsibility, the Directors’ capacity to fulfill their statutory accountabilities appeared dependant on the following features being in place and working well:

- i. a strong corporate ethos promoted and maintained by the Head of Paid Service and Councillors;
- ii. an infrastructure that supports information gathering and reporting at a corporate level and to Councillors on performance management, safeguarding and workforce;
- iii. confidence in and the visible strategic leadership of the Director; and
- iv. resilience of professional expertise.

A Strong Shared Corporate Ethos

4.5 This was a common issue remarked on in both the National Self Assessment and in the fieldwork interviews. This was described by authorities as including;

- i. Social Services having a shared focus across the authority as evidenced within the corporate vision statement or corporate priorities and included across strategic planning and improvement plans;
- ii. corporate systems configured to deliver against Social Services priorities and reporting requirements including the Director's Annual Report;
- iii. the Director of Social Services being an established member of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) with Social Services performance a standing item or regular item on the CMT agenda;
- iv. Directorates being held to account for their contribution to improvement by the Head of Paid Service;
- v. membership of CMT was viewed as a formal mechanism that enables the Director to contribute to the vision and direction of the council; ensure the influence of the Social Services agenda; and hear and advise on matters which might raise professional concern, potential damage or risk to reputation within the areas of accountability, policy-making and budget-setting;
- vi. mature corporate systems that provide oversight of the totality of Social Service functions and support the service improvement agenda;
- vii. commitment to Social Services described in terms of budget setting, with Social Services being often viewed as a 'protected' service given its recognised vulnerabilities and corporate profile;

and

- viii. formal and informal reporting systems supporting good communication and joint working.

4.6 From the field work it was evident that most authorities believed that they had some elements of the above in place. Where this was reported as working well to support the Director of Social

Services, the Corporate Management arrangements and members appeared to have adopted a positive view of their contribution to the Social Services improvement agenda and although recognised as a risk, Social Services were not viewed as a problem.

4.7 Formal meeting agendas and mechanisms helped to support these arrangements and reinforced senior officers' shared accountabilities and enabled more appropriate engagement and challenge. However, regardless of the structural configurations, silo working was still evident. In these instances, the ability of the Director to meet their accountabilities often remained dependant on the priority afforded to Social Services by the Head of Paid Service and the quality of the working relationship between the senior officers. An espoused ethos of embracing Social Services or participation by the Statutory Director in a Corporate Management Team whilst important, were not enough in themselves to guarantee robust support to the role of the Statutory Director.

Corporate infrastructure

4.8 Most authorities had developed a level of corporate infrastructure that had evolved to support the Director of Social Services particularly in relation to performance management, workforce planning and to some extent safeguarding. In the best examples there were strong corporate arrangements that delivered a well co-coordinated work programme. This was maintained through effective business support systems some of which had been decentralised to enhance the capacity of the Director of Social Services; others were managed through another directorate but had clear objectives that demonstrated effective collaborative arrangements.

Performance Management Systems

4.9 Given the performance frameworks that have been in place for some years, it was anticipated that most authorities would have well embedded performance management systems in place. The self assessment had confirmed that authorities were confident in their arrangements. From the fieldwork it was clear that in a number of areas, there had been corporate investment in performance systems and these helped to provide officers and Councillors with evidence that the Director was able to have oversight and influence of Social Services.

4.10 Where these systems worked well, there was an emphasis on corporate and local arrangements capturing reliable information against an agreed performance framework. These systems were supported by designated staff, both corporate and located within the service, and the information was subject to interrogation and analysis. The information was valued, made available across all levels of the organisation and was captured in such a way as to inform a range of reports including the Director's Annual Report and to underpin practice. Along side the performance systems a number of authorities had strong arrangements in place that supported open dialogue and challenge, directly involving Councillors, scrutiny, CMT, officers, staff and partners. These arrangements supported corporate ownership and a more positive understanding of the complexities of Social Services.

4.11 The most helpful performance reports seen were in an accessible format where the text provided an analysis of performance linked to intended outcomes. The outcomes included examples of the improvements as experienced by service users whilst identifying potential risks.

4.12 In contrast, where corporate performance systems were less well developed, it was not possible to show that the Director could maintain reliable oversight of the totality of Social Services. Nor did these systems support the need for corrective action prior to the point when serious concerns had already emerged. A lack of developed corporate systems was also found to reflect a lack of understanding and commitment to the Statutory Director's role and to be symptomatic of other underlying problems.

Workforce

4.13 There was evidence in both the self assessment and from the fieldwork that most of the authorities had systems in place to support the Director of Social Services engagement in the workforce agenda. The expectations of the guidance include that in working with others the Director, will provide leadership to ensure:

“ A whole sector workforce plan is in place and delivered which identifies and secures implementation of measures to ensure a sufficient large, skilled, safe and focused workforce to meet assessed needs addressing issues of recruitment and retention, vetting registration, reward, competencies, qualification, skill mix, training needs and support requirements and advising Councillors, partners and other providers where shortfalls produce shortcomings in service delivery or inhibit the council's capacity to discharge its statutory responsibilities. ”

4.14 The self assessment and the fieldwork inspection identified that the Director's leadership role was generally valued in relation to the Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP). The level of direct engagement of the Director in the process varied but authorities had developed a range of systems to support this programme. Officers and Councillors viewed it as appropriate that the responsibility for workforce planning and professional development was located with the Director of Social Services, as it ensured that the agenda had greater priority. However, the ability of the Director to deliver 'leadership' against the more wide ranging expectations as set out in the statutory guidance often did not appear to have been the subject of any detailed negotiation within the local authority.

4.15 The Director's accountability to ensure and deliver a whole sector workforce plan does not absolve other agencies and providers of their responsibility towards workforce planning and development. However, this was often little understood and in some cases appeared to be largely neglected by those who should in effect be partners in the important enterprise of workforce planning. There were many examples where Directors sought key strategic workforce information annually from other partners and agencies in order to discharge this role, but simply received no response, often even when reminded.

4.16 From the fieldwork it was clear that the Director of Social Services discharged their responsibilities for the totality of Social Services;

“ Advising Councillors, partners and other providers where shortfalls produce shortcomings in service delivery or inhibit the council’s capacity to discharge its statutory responsibilities provided. ”

Regardless of the location of the service, workforce pressures in relation to recruitment, retention and sickness absence appeared well known and had a significant corporate profile. In some authorities reported pressures had resulted in a corporate response, a review of workforce strategies including additional resources and a greater investment and emphasis on training. In other areas the workforce profile was understood more in relation to budget pressures rather than an understanding of the risks to the service. It is important that authorities recognise the need to achieve an effective balance between the corporate workforce strategy and the specific recruitment and retention needs of Social Services.

4.17 From the interviews undertaken as part of the fieldwork, the Director’s influence and role in ‘ensuring that the Council’s overarching personnel policies reflect the particular requirements for a safe workforce’ was less secure. Some authorities, particularly those with ‘dual’ arrangements appeared to have addressed the issue of safe recruitment as part of their negotiated arrangements. However, in a number of authorities this issue had only achieved prominence following the CSSIW and ESTYN report **Joint investigation into the handling and management of allegations of professional abuse and the arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education services in Pembrokeshire County Council**. Authorities appeared to be introducing more robust reporting arrangements both to Council and through their Safeguarding Boards. However, it is important that officers and Councillors have a shared understanding of what safeguarding means and that respective responsibilities in relation to safe recruitment and workforce are clearly negotiated formalised and communicated.

Safeguarding

Policy context: – Safeguarding Boards

4.18 The self assessments were undertaken at a time when the Welsh Government was developing a focus on regional collaboration.

Welsh Government guidance such as **Safeguarding Children Working Together under the Children Act 2004** has always recognised the importance of working across boundaries.

LSCB boundaries

“ In Wales boundaries between local authorities, the police and other member agencies are not always co-terminous and there can be problems for some member agencies in having to work to different procedures and protocols according to the area involved, or in having to participate in several Boards. It may be helpful in these circumstances for an LSCB to cover an area which includes more than one local authority area, or for adjoining Local Safeguarding Children Boards to collaborate as far as possible in establishing common procedures, policies and protocols, in inter-agency training and joint ways of working with neighbouring local authorities and their Board partners. (Safeguarding Children Working Together under the Children Act 2004.) ”

4.19 However, the momentum for such collaboration has significantly escalated and in October 2010 the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services set out her plans, in a written statement, for the safeguarding and protection agenda in Wales. One such proposal is the eventual establishment of Safeguarding & Protection Boards and this is currently being taken forward through the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Bill. The Deputy Minister stated her expectation that in respect of Local Safeguarding Children Boards these should begin developing collaborative arrangements prior to this legislation, and move from a local

authority footprint to a Public Service Delivery model of six. The statutory guidance on the role and accountabilities of the Director of Social Services published in 2009 predates these developments. However, the guidance has always been clear that the core accountabilities of the Director of Social Services need to be discharged regardless of any structural configurations.

Findings from the Self Assessment

4.20 The self assessment responses identified that as a minimum most authorities considered that they had:

- i. sound well grounded arrangements governing the management and practice of protection and safeguarding in place;

and

- ii. Local Safeguarding Children Board and Area Adult Protection Committee arrangements in place that are business like and have active involvement from all key agencies.

4.21 The supporting information mainly focused on the operation of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Adult Protection Committee. However, some authorities also reported on the positive impact of their investment in Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Units working across Children and Adult Social Services or Children Social Services and Education.

4.22 In relation to the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Area Adult Protection Committee arrangements the self assessments reported the following features.

- i. **Governance documents in place** – Examples included role profiles and job descriptions for members, partnership agreements, clarifying the relationship with other strategic partnerships, annual reporting and business plan arrangements.

Example provided

“ Local Safeguarding Children Board produces an annual review that details achievements made and the priority areas for focus for the forthcoming year. The annual review is developed and progress is scrutinised by both the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Governance sub group on a quarterly basis. ”

- ii. **Membership** – was described as compliant with guidance, some boards monitored partners attendance and contributions. Membership of some boards had been extended to include the relevant cabinet member.
- iii. **Chairing arrangements** – It appeared that as a response to the core accountabilities of the statutory Director most Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Area Adult Protection Committees are now chaired either directly by the Statutory Director Social Services or by an Assistant Director/Head of Service (adults or children) who reports to the Statutory Director. Regional collaboration however had also begun to impact on this adding an additional level of complexity, for example at the time of reporting in one.

Example provided

“ There is currently a tripartite AAPC with the neighbouring Councils. It is chaired on a rotating 12 month basis by an Assistant Director Adult Services, and it meets each quarter. There is consistent multi agency representation and a joint action plan is established. The AAPC is now being developed on a region wide basis... A draft terms of reference for the new AAPC has been developed and it is anticipated it will be reconstituted later this year. ”

- iv. **Performance and reporting arrangements;** These arrangements varied but examples included, quarterly performance reports discussed at the respective boards and reported through Corporate Management arrangements and scrutiny. Most Local Safeguarding Children's Boards also reported some level of quality assurance activity undertaken through the audit sub group.

Findings from the Fieldwork Inspection

4.23 From the fieldwork it was apparent that of the six core accountabilities of the Statutory Director of Social Services safeguarding appeared to be the most readily recognised and had the most significant profile across officer's, Councillors and partners.

4.24 The guidance describes the accountability of the statutory Director as ensuring 'sound child and adult safeguarding arrangements and reporting' these responsibilities include:

- i. oversee and report to Councillors on the operation, monitoring and improvement of child and adult protection and safeguarding systems; and
- ii. ensure the effective operation of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Area Adult Protection Committee and especially that lessons are learned from serious case reviews and applied as necessary by all agencies.

The guidance also states that:

- iii. 'Whilst all staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the Director of Social Services remains the senior officer within the Council with final and indivisible accountability for this. In relation to vulnerable adults the statutory basis for this responsibility is less clear cut and firm than with children. However, the responsibility for taking the lead in ensuring effective local procedures rests with Social Services for which the Director is accountable'.

4.25 From the fieldwork it was apparent that within the local authority:

- i. the Statutory Director's responsibility for 'ensuring that safeguarding services work well for both children and adults services within the council and for the standard of services', was generally recognised;

- ii. these accountabilities were supported in a few authorities by established corporate and local quality assurance systems in place to provide the necessary information, checks and balances to safeguard and protect children and adults;
- iii. the quality of performance information systems was variable and not all authorities had arrangements in place that provided a regular opportunity for officers and councillors to interrogate performance information;
- iv. the safeguarding arrangements were viewed as stronger by those interviewed where the delegations and reporting arrangements between the Statutory Director and other officers, particularly the Head of Adult Services and the Head of Children Services, were clear;
- v. Some organisational structures and models of delivery (both single and dual models) meant that the reporting arrangements were not well defined, resulting in a level of uncertainty regarding accountability. In these circumstances, the arrangements were viewed as overly reliant on informal meetings between officers which would be vulnerable to changes of personnel; and
- vi. The visibility of the Statutory Director, the personal and professional authority of the post holder, the availability and location of professional expertise as well as the stability of the senior management arrangements within Social Services were all recognised as impacting on the effectiveness of the Statutory Director to meet their accountabilities.

4.26 However the role of the Statutory Director was generally less well understood in relation to the designation as senior officer within the council for safeguarding:

- i. officers, Councillors and Partners stated this was a recognised part of the role but could often not describe what it meant in relation to the respective safeguarding responsibilities of the Statutory Director and that of other officers;
- ii. authorities with dual directorates had discussed this more formally as part of the development of their additional written framework documents, however some of these protocols had not been renegotiated for some time and current post holders therefore had varying degrees of ownership; and

- iii. in some instances there appeared an over reliance that the structural arrangements would themselves ensure better safeguarding practice. For example, the co-location of services e.g. children services and education in the same directorate, was described as raising awareness across professional groups and improved communication. However, there was often little evidence provided to demonstrate how the authority knew that this translated into improved operational safeguarding practice.

4.27 Some authorities had developed additional mechanisms that helped the Statutory Director have greater oversight of safeguarding across the authority. Examples of these included:

- i. regular corporate and or local reporting arrangements in place between the Statutory Director and Human Resources directorate to consider safe recruitment and working practices;
- ii. designated safeguarding staff (mainly linked to the LSCB/AAPC) reporting directly to the Statutory Director; and
- iii. an investment in the development of safeguarding and quality assurance units that work across services and report, through their line management arrangements, to the Statutory Director of Social Services.

4.28 It was clear that the publication of the Pembrokeshire inspection reports had raised the profile of reciprocal safeguarding responsibilities. Most authorities reported that they had recently undertaken work, under the leadership of the Director of Social Services, to assure themselves that their arrangements were appropriate and this had been reported through to scrutiny. It was of concern that prior to the publication of the Pembrokeshire inspection reports few of the authorities had previously considered the key issues systematically.

4.29 Overall authorities would benefit from investing time in negotiating a clear understanding of the responsibilities and accountabilities of all officers in respect of safeguarding. Including the interface between the Director's accountabilities and their leadership role with other officers delegated functions and reporting responsibilities.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board and Area Adult Protection Committee

4.30 Officers, Councillors and partners appeared more comfortable in describing the safeguarding accountabilities of the Statutory Director in relation to their role, or representation on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) or the Area Adult Protection Committee (AAPC). The designated Statutory Director does not have to chair the LSCB or the AAPC to meet their accountabilities. For example **Safeguarding Children; Working Together under the Children Act 2004** states that membership of the LSCB should include:

“the authority's Director of Social Services or some other officer directly accountable to that Director who is of sufficient seniority to represent the authority instead of that Director.”

Chairing of the LSCB

Safeguarding Children; Working Together under the Children Act 2004 also states that;

“The LSCB should be chaired by somebody of sufficient standing and expertise to command the respect and support of member agencies, and who has a firm grasp of local operational issues. The chair may come from any member agency, chairing may rotate between member agencies, or the chair may be independent of member agencies according to local decision.”

4.31 In most of the authorities visited, the Director of Social Services either chaired was a member of, or directly line managed the officer representing the authority on the respective board. Partner agencies, officers and Councillors welcomed this visible evidence of the Director's safeguarding leadership. The proximity of the Director of Social Services with the respective boards was recognised as:

- i. raising the profile of safeguarding and child and adult protection across agencies; and

- ii. supporting the Director to exert influence and leadership in relation to wider multi-agency safeguarding issues.

4.32 In a small number of authorities, the structural arrangements meant that the Director did not line manage the authority's representative on one of the safeguarding boards. In some instances this made partners and officers less confident of the Statutory Director's oversight and there was a need to refresh and or develop protocol agreements.

4.33 A number of the authorities visited had developed or were in the process of developing regional collaborations. Although viewed positively in some areas, in others the chosen configuration was described as potentially making the Director of Social Services 'distant from the safeguarding agenda'. In future not all Statutory Directors will have the same visible presence on the LSCB/AAPC. However, collaborative arrangements do not absolve the Statutory Director from their statutory safeguarding accountabilities. Rather these will need to be actively considered as part of any collaborative negotiation.

Confidence and the visible leadership of the Statutory Director

4.34 The visible leadership of the Statutory Director in relation to the development of key strategic priorities across both adults and children's services was reported as a significant indicator of the post holder's capacity to meet their statutory accountabilities. Part of these arrangements includes formal and informal systems that enable the Director of Social Services to have direct access to Councillors, Cabinet Members with responsibility for Social Services and reporting arrangements to scrutiny.

4.35 However, the ability to provide the strategic leadership for the totality of Social Services was not always apparent. This was more marked in some of the 'dual' models, where the delegations meant that the Statutory Director was not viewed, by others, as the strategic lead for one of the services. An example of this was where the Statutory Director was not the lead in negotiating the shape and alignment of Social Services in relation to future integration or collaboration with other authorities or agencies. This example raised the question as to whether these arrangements had the

unintentional effect of undermining the role of the Statutory Director. The impact of the integration and collaboration agenda is not sufficiently addressed in the current guidance.

4.36 Alongside the corporate arrangements, the leadership of the Statutory Director was often described in terms of the range of meetings and strategic partnerships the Director chaired or attended. It was this direct engagement that appeared to give members, Head of Paid Service, officers and partner's greater confidence in the Director's connection and oversight of their accountabilities. Where capacity issues prevented this e.g. due to the range of additional corporate responsibilities or lack of direct line management responsibility, officers appeared to view the arrangements as less secure. The capacity, in realistic or practical terms, of one person's ability to meet the range of accountabilities expected of them as the Director of Social Services was often raised as a potential risk, but did not appear to have constrained the desire of councils to place additional corporate responsibilities with the post holder.

Resilience of professional expertise

4.37 The self assessment of compliance against the Statutory Director's core responsibilities completed 2011/2012 identified that all authorities had met the statutory requirement to designate a Director of Social Services. Authorities reported that since 2009 the recruitment to the post of Statutory Director is routinely undertaken against the six core accountabilities and the recommended competencies. In a number of instances it was this recruitment process that had prompted the review of core documentation such as the Director's job description.

4.38 Those authorities with long standing Directors appointed prior to the introduction of the guidance were confident that the Director met the core accountabilities, not least because of the individual's proven experience of managing Social Services.

4.39 All authorities reported that the Director of Social Services was the subject of an annual appraisal. This appraisal was usually part of the corporate arrangements and therefore, not always specifically designed against the 6 core accountabilities.

4.40 The guidance states that the Director of Social Services responsibilities include providing clear professional leadership across Social Services. However, it is silent on the 'professional' qualification required of a Director of Social Services to provide this 'professional leadership'. Within the nineteen recommended competencies it does include the expectation that the Director will have:

- i. knowledge of the legislative and structural context of Social Services and Social Care in Wales;
- ii. substantial experience and sound judgement in the management of Social Services or Social Care Services including areas in safeguarding; and
- iii. understanding and experience of working in publically accountable national and local political contexts answerable to Councillors.

4.41 Interpretation of the guidance appeared dependant upon the range of additional responsibilities located with the Director of Social Services. In one of the field work authorities, where the recently designated Statutory Director was appointed despite the absence of a substantial background in Social Services, this issue was recognised and ameliorated by additional mentoring arrangements being put in place.

4.42 Even where a Director had a professional background in Social Services the level of professional resilience in the structural arrangements was often found to be dependent on the Head of Adult Services and the Head of Children's Service or their designated equivalent to provide professional expertise and advice. This distribution of responsibility and professional expertise is normal in any organisation but where the Statutory Director has no professional background the role of the Head Service becomes more important. Where the Statutory Director is neither professionally qualified in social care nor experienced in Social Services management, the Head of Service role becomes pivotal but this did not always appear, in the examples visited, to be reflected in written delegations. In effect, in these circumstances, the council's most senior professionally qualified manager had no defined role in relation to the functions of the Statutory Director.

4.43 These officers were generally identified by Councillors, Officers and Partners as the expert professionals within the structure and as such were expected to exercise significant delegated responsibility both for the strategic and the operational agenda in their service area.

4.44 Given the range of these delegations, officers at Head of Service level appeared more confident in the Statutory Director's oversight where the following features existed:

- i. clear reporting arrangements and accountabilities;
- ii. regular formal and informal direct contact with the Statutory Director;
- iii. the Director had a sound knowledge of Social Services and was viewed as able to provide, direction support and constructive challenge; and
- iv. where there were high levels of trust between senior officers.

4.45 Gaps and capacity issues resulting from the range of responsibilities delegated to the Head of Service level were identified as a potential risk to the Director's capacity and ability to meet their statutory responsibilities. Some authorities have experienced difficulty in recruiting to the Head of Service and in a few of the authorities visited, the Head of Service arrangements had been filled on a temporary basis. A number of authorities stated the need to strengthen this level of the structure and more formally recognise the importance of the lead professional role.

5 Reciprocal Relationships

5.1 In the context of this inspection reciprocal arrangements were considered in relation to:

- i. the Statutory Director of Social Services had appropriate access to the Head of Paid Service and Councillors;
- ii. reciprocal arrangements were in place between the Director of Social Services and other senior officers within the council to enable the necessary fulfillment of the accountabilities vested in the post holder; and

- iii. the Head of Paid Service was able to satisfy themselves that the arrangements supported the Statutory role of the Director of Social Services.

The guidance highlights that:

“ In discharging the accountabilities... the Director will need to work collaboratively with a range of people but especially Councillors, other Chief Officers, senior staff in partner agencies, service users and their families, and staff within the Social Services, particularly Heads of Service whether in direct line management or not. ”

Head of Paid Service

5.2 The Head of Paid Service as the council's most senior officer is;

- i. accountable to the Council and to the public for the execution of all Council services; and
- ii. responsible for the management and leadership of all Directors and Chief officers, and for creating the conditions in which others can perform, innovate and provide leadership within service.

5.3 From the field work it was clear that the authority of the Head of Paid Service was well understood but that officers and Councillors found it more difficult to articulate the parameters of the role in terms of 'accountability' in relation to Social Services. Although the statement within the guidance concerning 'indivisible accountability' suggests a clear and simple delineation of responsibility, it obscures what in practice is a potentially highly complex set of circumstances and relationships overall. The guidance states that the Director of Social Services:

“ retains final and indivisible accountability for the quality and delivery of social care services whether these are directly provided or commissioned. ”

5.4 However the guidance is clear that the 'Statutory Director is accountable to the Head of Paid Service and through them to the council' and that as the most senior officer, the Head of Paid Service is expected to create the conditions in 'which others can perform, innovate and provide leadership within service'. As a response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry report (Report of an inquiry by Lord Laming 2003), the Heads of Paid Service also have a responsibility in relation to Social Services, 'to inform and involve themselves as part of the overall leadership and management of the Council'.

5.5 Within the guidance there is an unambiguous expectation that the Director of Social Services, has direct access with the Head of Paid Service and the Council and this forms part of the condition needed for the Director of Social Services to 'perform, innovate and provide leadership within service as it will':

- i. raise the corporate profile of the statutory role;
- ii. enable the Director of Social Services to provide professional advice on Social Services compliance against statutory functions, priorities, challenges, risks and resources;
- iii. ensure that political leadership can be well informed across Social Services issues;
- iv. support strategic planning and thinking regarding new developments across Social Services; and
- v. enable the Head of Paid Service and members to identify and act to resolve barriers to delivering the Director of Social Services core accountabilities.

5.6 These arrangements are significant in that 'The regularity and quality of meeting time between the Head of Paid Service and the Director of Social Services is a crucial element in the relationship of accountability' The guidance is equally clear that, 'As the Director of Social Services is a statutory appointment they should be a full member of the top management team under the leadership of the Head of Paid Service'.

5.7 Therefore although the Statutory Director has indivisibly accountable for service delivery by definition they share key aspects of responsibility with the Head of Paid Service. The Head of Paid Service has a pivotal role in empowering the designated Director of Social Services and in ensuring that they are supported by the corporate infrastructure to meet their statutory accountabilities. Given the potential complexities of this interface it is essential that the relationship between the Head of Paid Service and that of the Statutory Director Social Services is explicitly negotiated and appropriately communicated to Councillors, officers and partners. Also that this delineation of responsibilities is formalised in relevant governance and delegation documents that are appropriately updated.

5.8 As part of the self assessment, most respondents indicated that they had arrangements in place between Councillors, Head of Paid Service and the Director of Social Services that they viewed as meeting these requirements.

The more comprehensive responses provided examples of the arrangements in place between the Head of Paid Service and the Director Social Services that included;

- i. The Director has formal one to one meetings on a monthly basis with the Chief Executive Officer to discuss specific aspects of the role and issues within the department.

Corporate Management Team arrangements were described as:—

- ii. The Corporate Director of Social Services is a member of the Corporate Management Team that meets on a weekly basis. The Corporate Director of Social Services is able to shape and gain support through this vehicle. The Corporate Management Team also meets weekly with cabinet to discuss service delivery issues and development. (single directorate)
- iii. The Corporate Director is a member of the Corporate Management Team and as such is involved in the development of all key corporate policies, strategies and budget. The Director regularly reviews key performance information with the chief executive to identify any areas of concern and the joint meetings with the Director of Children's Services provides a shared focus

on safeguarding and family support services. (integrated directorate)

- iv. The Director Social Services is a member of the Council's Senior Executive Team, which meets fortnightly and has a regular agenda item to report specific Social Services issues.

5.9 The field work confirmed that some authorities had well established formal arrangements in place and the best examples included such features as:

- i. regular, diarised, 'one to one meeting' between the Head of Paid Service and the Director of Social Services;
- ii. 'one to one meetings' meetings had an agenda and were recorded;
- iii. Director of Social Services an established member of a Corporate Management Team; and
- iv. Corporate Management Team meetings diarised with formal minutes and an agenda that includes Social Services: safeguarding, workforce and performance issues.

5.10 Although all authorities had some form of reporting or 'one to one' arrangements between the Statutory Director and the Head of Paid Service, these arrangements were not always formal and were not routinely recorded. Rather there was often a reliance on individuals making their own notes and a significant emphasis was placed on trust in the relationship.

5.11 The status of the one to one meetings as a means of 'reporting' often lacked clarity, given the seniority and delegations of the officers involved there appeared to be a shared view that the meetings were not 'supervisory' rather in some authorities they were described more in terms of discussion opportunities rather than formal briefings. The guidance is clear that the 'regularity and quality of meeting time between Head of Paid Service and the Director of Social Services is a crucial element in the relationship of accountability'.

5.12 In most, but not all, authorities visited as part of the fieldwork, the Director of Social Services was a member of the Corporate Management Team. Although Social Services was not always a standing agenda item the Directors of Social Services and other officers confirmed that Social Services issues were regularly reported. These meetings were also described as an opportunity for Directors to give a view on wider corporate issues.

5.13 The relationship between the Statutory Director and other members of the Corporate Management Team presented as quite complicated. The role of the Statutory Director at times appeared to be valued for its 'accountability' but not for its expectation to provide routine 'challenge' across directorates, e.g. in relation to safeguarding issues. The dynamic of this interface was found to be directly dependant on the leadership of the Head of Paid Service. Where other members of the Corporate Management Team had knowledge of the complexities of Social Services this helped to promote the engagement with the Social Services agenda and the cohesion of the corporate approach.

5.14 The more accessible aspects of the Director of Social Services accountabilities appeared to have a higher profile at the Corporate Management meetings. These included Social Services performance information, workforce issues and sickness absence, particularly as they affected budgets and performance.

5.15 Most authorities kept formal minutes of the Corporate Management Team meetings. However, the quality of these was very variable and in some instances could not be relied on to capture evidence that the Statutory Director of Social Services had the opportunity to exert their influence against their statutory accountabilities or that the Head of Paid Service had set the cultural tone that enabled them to do this.

5.16 In addition to the programme of corporate meetings such as the Corporate Management Team, most officers emphasised the importance of informal interaction between senior officers and the Head of Paid Service. Such 'custom and practice' arrangements were often valued as promoting more immediate communication whilst providing greater opportunity for challenge and debate. In some authorities this was supported through the co-location of the Head of Paid Service with the Corporate Management Team. The guidance recognises the need in complex organisations for both formal and informal communication systems, however, an over reliance on informal arrangements could potentially weaken assurance that decision making is undertaken appropriately and transparently.

5.17 In the self assessment, a small number of authorities, with examples from both single and dual directorates, acknowledged that their structural arrangements did not meet guidance expectations in that the Director Social Services either did not formally report to the Head of Paid Service, and or the Director was not an established member of the corporate management team.

5.18 From the field work it appeared that where the structure did not, or had only recently begun to meet guidance expectations, the authority had needed to build additional organisational arrangements. In these circumstances the Directors reported the importance of the guidance in ensuring that the corporate profile of the Statutory Director role was recognised. In some instances where the Director reported to a senior officer in the authority but not the Head of Paid Service, formal additional meetings between the Director and the Head of Paid Service had been established to discuss the statutory responsibilities of the role; this could be viewed as a positive construct but the interface and advantages of such layered arrangements was not clear.

5.19 There were also identified disadvantages in the Director not being an established full member of the Corporate Management Team as this limited their ability to inform and contribute to the overall strategic corporate agenda.

In these circumstances although the Director met their responsibilities this was often attributed to the dedication and professional background of the post holder. The resilience of the arrangements was also dependant on other key professionals within Social Services and subject to pressures where post holders left the authority.

5.20 It was noted that across all the authorities visited, there had been changes in personnel at either Head of Paid Service, designated Statutory Director, membership of Corporate Management Team or Head of Service level. The clarity of the structural arrangements therefore should be viewed as an essential part of building the organisation's resilience.

5.21 The guidance has been in place since 2009 however, it appeared that in some authorities so much energy had been invested in developing their structure that they have only recently begun

to question if their arrangements appropriately supported the accountabilities of the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services.

Preventing Barriers

5.22 It was clear that where the Head of Paid Service provided a positive focus on Social Services they were well informed and sought to use their authority within the council to help resolve internal barriers and would proactively resolve internal disputes between services.

5.23 The Head of Paid Service was also able to exert influence and instigate actions across agencies through such forums as the Local Service Board. Although the Local Service Board is not a delivery device it was often described as a leadership forum for overcoming blockages and barriers.

The role of the Local Service Board was not always well articulated by officers and Councillors and its effectiveness was often described in terms of the quality of personal relationships developed between the most senior officers.

However, even within these parameters, it remains to be seen whether the advent of Local Service Boards will release strategic blockages that directly impact on the ability of the Statutory Director of Social Services to meet their accountabilities and secure better outcomes for children and adults in need of Social Care.

5.24 In some areas regional collaborative arrangements had been developed, such as the Pan Gwent collaboration. These again involved the most Senior Officers from across agencies. Although adding to the layers of organisational complexity these mechanisms appeared to have a greater focus on the need for agencies to work better together. This was particularly important in difficult financial environments and these were presented as being more proactive in looking at shared issues and developing shared solutions. The emphasis on regional collaboration is relatively new and the impact on the role of the Director is therefore not well reflected in the guidance.

Relationship and access to Councillors

5.25 The guidance states that;

“ Within each Local Authority Social Services functions are the responsibility of the executive which must ensure that Social Services have the leadership and clarity of direction it needs. Clear accountability arrangements for Social Services must be made to councillors. ”

5.26 The guidance and previous CSSIW inspections reports have identified a number of features that need to be in place to support such clear accountability, these include:

- i. clear written accessible information that sets out governance and decision making responsibilities between the Cabinet, Scrutiny, Head of Paid Service and CMT. This should specifically include the role and accountabilities of the Statutory Director of Social Services;
- ii. clear written, accessible, information that sets out what information Councillors should expect to receive, including in what form and frequency;
- iii. the need for Councillors in whatever role they perform to be clear about what is expected of them and what they should expect from officers;
- iv. the need for Councillors in whatever role they perform to be effectively supported in their role; and
- v. to ensure impactful and effective scrutiny, Councillors need the appropriate training and skills to ask relevant probing questions.

5.27 In the self assessment authorities reported that they had arrangements in place that gave the Director of Social Services appropriate access to Councillors:

- i. that the Director's advice was available to Councillors on the direction and actions the authority should take to fulfil its Social Services responsibility;
- ii. that the advice was based on compliance against statutory duty, service quality and capacity in relation to resources;
- iii. the more comprehensive self assessment responses included examples such as;

- iv. weekly meetings take place with Portfolio Councillors and monthly service updates are provided to Portfolio Members, Executive Board and the Leader of the Council;
- v. there are regular meetings with the Executive Board Councillors for Social Services which encompass their statutory responsibilities, service quality and resource issues;
- vi. the Director has a scheduled pattern of meetings with Lead Members. Agendas cover current council business through Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees, locality issues, new opportunities, cross service developments, feedback from services, budget and performance issues, collaborations, and horizon scanning; and
- vii. the Director has weekly liaison meetings with the Cabinet Member and the Heads of Service.

5.28 The fieldwork confirmed that all authorities regardless of the structure configuration had arrangements in place between the Director of Social Services and the Lead Member(s). These arrangements were viewed by the Director of Social Services as supporting their reporting responsibilities.

The formal arrangements most frequently cited by officers included:

- i. scheduled meetings between the Director of Social Services and portfolio holders; and
- ii. scheduled meetings between the portfolio holders and relevant heads of service.

In some authorities additional arrangements had also been established including lead member(s) regularly attending:

- i. extended Corporate Management Team Meeting;
- ii. Director of Social Services Senior Management Team Meeting (SMT) (totality of Social Services or service specific);
- iii. an extended SMT that including both Adult and Children Services and relevant portfolio leads (in dual arrangements); and
- iv. Head of Service Management Team meetings.

Other arrangements included:

- i. established formal meetings to scrutinise Social Services performance information involving the Head of Paid Service, Statutory Director of Social Services, other senior officers and corporate leads assurance against performance information;
- ii. regular formal meetings between the Leader of the Council and the Director of Social Services to discuss their accountabilities;
- iii. all authorities also had developed a range of informal interactions between senior officers in Social Services and the relevant portfolio holders.

5.29 Officers and Councillors reported confidence in their arrangements however, in a few authorities it was acknowledged that:–

- i. structural arrangements were new and reporting expectations still needed to be embedded;
- ii. previous structural arrangements had not adequately promoted the role of the Statutory Director;
- iii. the quality of performance information collected was seen as weakening Councillors oversight; and
- iv. members expressed disquiet about the level of access they had to the Statutory Director in shared arrangements.

5.30 Councillors were clear in their commitment to Social Services and viewed it as a shared corporate priority. This was often seen in relation to budget setting and workforce priorities. Although there was considerable interaction between the Director of Social Services and lead members, inspectors found that regardless of the structure, the oversight provided by these arrangements was very variable and the issues identified are discussed below.

- i. The designated 'formal' meetings arrangements between the Director of Social Services, Head of Service and councillors did not always have an agenda and were not routinely recorded. This means that there is not always an audit trail that can be used to hold Officers to account.
- ii. Interaction between the Officers and Councillors was valued and given a priority, however, there was often an over reliance on trust in these working relationships.

- iii. A number of the designated Lead Councillors although experienced council Councillors were new to their portfolio brief, following a recent election.
 - iv. Therefore it was acknowledged that they were still learning their portfolio responsibilities. In these circumstances although training was available, councillors expressed gaps in their understanding of the role of the Statutory Director, the relationship between the directorates and they appeared to lack confidence in their ability to challenge officers and ask for more information.
 - v. Councillors felt more confident of the profile afforded to Social Services where they could articulate this against a clear vision that was driving the strategy for Social Services. However, in some instances they did not know how the structural arrangements had been determined or how they supported the Director of Social Services meet their accountabilities for the totality of Social Services.
 - vi. Support was expressed by Councillors for arrangements that meant more than one director promoted the Social Services agenda, however in some authorities there was a lack of clarity regarding how the designated Statutory Director maintained visible strategic leadership for the development of key priorities across both Adults and Children's Services.
 - vii. The role of the Director of Social Services was often described by councillors in terms of responsibility for safeguarding. The role of the Director as chair or member of the LSCB or AAPB was understood but councillors were less clear regarding the parameters of the safeguarding responsibilities negotiated between officers within the authority and how the designated Director would demonstrate that they had discharged their accountabilities.
 - viii. In some authorities the designation of the role of the Statutory Director was determined because Councillors had confidence in an individual officer; the location of the role was pragmatic rather than reflecting a negotiated organisational structure.
 - ix. The benefits of the span of responsibilities invested in individual officers designated as the Statutory Director of Social Services were not always well understood nor were the additional pressures this placed on the service.
 - x. Trust and confidence in the Statutory Director was often directly attributed to the personal credibility of the individual rather than based on an understanding of the professional leadership and accountabilities demanded of the role.
 - xi. Councillors were more confident in their leadership role where they had experience and felt supported by formal embedded corporate arrangements that enabled them to engage with officers on a regular basis to discuss progress against clear analysed good quality performance information.
- 5.31 Authorities need to address this variability and ensure that formal protocols are in place that clearly set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the Director and of Councillors. An absence of clarity will inevitably affect the performance and safety of the service and the ability of all concerned to effectively discharge their responsibilities and accountabilities.

Engagement with the scrutiny processes

5.32 The guidance recognises scrutiny and overview as an essential and integral part of the executive arrangements.

The guidance states that:

- i. 'Directors of Social Services may have to perform different roles in relation to their Council's overview and scrutiny functions, and may occasionally need to manage tensions between these roles. As chief professional adviser to the Council on Social Services matters, the Director will advise the scrutiny committees directly involved in children's and adults' Social Services matters, and possibly others with a relevant interest in Social Services matters. The committees will examine services, for which the Director has providing, commissioning or coordinating responsibilities, and may be critical of aspects of performance, provision and shortfalls. The Director will have relevant knowledge and networks to support the committees' work in seeking views from

citizens, groups and organisations in the wider community, some of whom may differ from the Council in their views on priorities, resource levels and criteria for allocation’.

5.33 Although the National Self Assessments did not focus on the Director’s engagement with scrutiny, from the information provided it appeared that they believed they had appropriate arrangements in place.

5.34 From the field work, scrutiny arrangements appeared generally well defined in respect of Children and Adult Social Services but were less clear in relation to the key cross-cutting issues that are significant for the ‘the totality of Social Services’, e.g. workforce.

5.35 Where authorities had adopted dual arrangements, the scrutiny function was generally developed to reflect the Director’s span of direct service line management responsibilities such as:

- i. Adult Services and Health/Health and Wellbeing.
- or
- ii. Education and Children /Children and Young People.

In these authorities scrutiny boards were usually attended by the Corporate Director for the service, who may or may not be the Statutory Director of Social Services and/or the relevant Head of Service with delegated responsibilities who provided professional advice. In these arrangements, scrutiny of the totality of Social Services was managed by;

- i. Other Directors reporting on behalf of the Statutory Director.

or

- ii. Additional over arching scrutiny meetings arranged by exception and attended by the Statutory Director of Social Services e.g. to discuss the Statutory Director’s report.

5.36 Where authorities had adopted a single structural arrangement, some scrutiny committees reflected this and were responsible for the totality of Social Services. Examples included **Children and Social Care**, and in some areas ‘People’ scrutiny boards.

In these authorities scrutiny boards were usually

attended by the Statutory Director of Social Services and/or the relevant Heads of Service who had delegated responsibilities and provided the specific professional expertise.

5.37 Despite their structural arrangements in some instances, single authorities had also elected to split the Social Services scrutiny agenda between ‘Children and Young People’ and ‘Adult Services. The intention being to ensure appropriate time was afforded to both service agendas.

In these authorities the Statutory Director of Social Services related to both scrutiny arrangements or had delegated this to the Head of Service. Where the scrutiny function was split, the scrutiny arrangements for the totality of Social Services was again managed by the Director attending both scrutiny meetings or through an additional shared scrutiny meeting being convened by exception e.g. to discuss the Statutory Director’s report .

5.38 There appeared to be greater confidence in the scrutiny arrangements where they were supported by a direct line of accountability to the service, but also where a strong corporate infrastructure was in place that included a robust performance information framework.

5.39 The issues identified in relation to the Statutory Director’s engagement with scrutiny were found to be similar across authorities and not confined to any one structural configuration, these included:

- i. scrutiny members, particularly if new to the role, did not routinely have an understanding of the accountabilities of the Statutory Director of Social Services or the reciprocal arrangements in place across directorates;
- ii. in some instances scrutiny councillors were unclear regarding the level of access they should have or expect from the Statutory Director of Social Services;
- iii. where scrutiny arrangements were new, particularly where previous arrangements had not promoted the role of the Statutory Director, reporting expectations needed to be made more explicit and developed; and

- iv. the quality of the reports and the underpinning information and analysis provided by officers to scrutiny were very variable.

5.40 It is clear that to secure strong, effective and robust scrutiny arrangements scrutiny Councillors need additional support, training and skills to enable them to fully understand Social Services and to ask relevant probing questions and in order to provide appropriate challenge. This is a key function in ensuring effective delivery of Social Services and authorities need to consider how with the WLGA they can secure the necessary consistency and quality of scrutiny of Social Services across all councils.

Reciprocal arrangements with other senior officers and partners

5.41 The guidance states that:

“Professional leadership extends the corporate task in managing services (such as managing work, staff, resources and performance) to one of wider engagement. This includes being an authoritative advocate for the social care and social regeneration agenda, supporting the development of evidence based practice and engaging in the wider professional and service networks to contribute and support collaborative development and service delivery. It is important this is not only seen in the provision of Social Services and Social Care services but also in what the Director can contribute to wider corporate initiatives such as in the promotion of well being.”

For the purposes of this inspection, reciprocal arrangements were considered in relation to the formal arrangement in place to ensure that the Statutory Director of Social Services receives and provides relevant information, assistance and challenge both to and from other parts of the organisation and other partner agencies.

5.42 All authorities, involved in the fieldwork, had developed a range of reciprocal arrangements both within and outside the local authority. However, as already indicated, the degree to which these arrangements were formally negotiated and set out in writing was very variable. These arrangements were better established, regardless of the organisational structure, where:

- i. the Head of Paid Service maintained a strong oversight of the collaborative arrangements;
- ii. the Statutory Director was confident and had established the authority of the role against clear expectations;
- iii. officers and partners had been involved in negotiations around the interface of their respective roles and this had been communicated across the authority and to partner agencies; and
- iv. there had been corporate investment in developing systems that provided a reporting framework for performance management, workforce and safeguarding.

Departmental Senior Management Team (DSMT)

5.43 Irrespective of the nature of any given Corporate Management Team's membership, the composition of the Statutory Director's own Senior Management Teams tended to reflect the overall structure of the authority's service directorates. In some 'dual' directorates arrangements were in place to extend membership of these meetings on a regular basis to include the Head of Service, not directly line managed by the Statutory Director.

5.44 As the span of the Statutory Director's responsibilities in some areas was very wide, these meetings could include senior officers for example from housing, Health (joint LHB appointments) or education. In a few authorities, in recognition of the Statutory Director's wider leadership e.g. for safeguarding and workforce, the Departmental Senior Management Team arrangements had been extended to include managers outside the Director's line management accountabilities from, education, housing, human resources, commissioning and finance. The Statutory Director also had one to one meeting arrangements with the members of DSMT.

5.45 Those Statutory Directors and officers involved in an extended Departmental Senior Management Team viewed these as helpful formal opportunities to share information, provide direction and challenge across the organisation. Partner agencies were also invited to attend these meeting as appropriate.

5.46 In most authorities the officers interviewed were confident that the status of the Director of Social Services meant that they could exert their influence over partnership working. The role of the Lead Director Children and Young People and the interface with the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services was not however, well understood by officers and other partners.

5.47 In most authorities, officers and partners described the Statutory Director's involvement, or representation by senior officers from Social Services, in a range of strategic and operational partnerships and meetings (many of which the Director chairs) as visible evidence of the Director's leadership and the strength of the reciprocal relationships in place. The Director's membership of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Area and the Adult protection Committee was particularly emphasised as a means of ensuring that the Statutory Director would be informed of significant safeguarding issue across both Social Services and partner agencies.

5.48 In one authority, where the organisation was undergoing significant change, it was recognised that previous arrangements had weakened the oversight of the statutory Director, as corporate systems were underdeveloped and the organisational structure hindered the post holder from exerting visible leadership.

5.49 In most authorities the effectiveness of reciprocal relationships remained highly invested in the relationships developed between individual Senior officers and partners in relation to specific issues.

5.50 In some authorities, there appeared an over reliance by officers and partners on the Statutory Director for making the reciprocal relationship work. Whilst the guidance is clear regarding the Statutory Director's leadership responsibilities and for example in relation to safeguarding their 'final and indivisible accountability',

this should not be interpreted as releasing others from their professional responsibilities.

5.51 As the guidance does not detail or provide a role profile for officers and partners in relation to the role and accountabilities of the Statutory Director, authorities should invest time in developing these expectations for themselves and review their effectiveness of these reciprocal arrangements on a regular basis.

6 Annual Report

6.1 The statutory guidance includes the clear requirement that:

“ The Director of Social Services must report annually to their Council on the delivery, performance and risk as well as plans for improvement of the whole range of Social Services functions. The report will have an important role in the development of the Council's overarching Improvement Plan (WPI). ”

The guidance list a number of expectations, these include that the report will:

- i. take into account the views of service users and their families as well as other key stakeholders;
- ii. report the full set of Social Care (adults) and Social Care (children) performance information indicators; and
- iii. include reference to all client groups.

The Director of Social Services is expected to:

- i. oversee all stages of the process;
- ii. brief the Lead Member(s) and other Councillors, the Head of Paid Service and other Chief Officers about any aspects causing concern; and
- iii. build on the Council's corporate and service performance and data systems.

The guidance further states that the process and the report 'must be owned by those in the service, so that they "recognise the picture" and that It is vital that the Council and its citizens, as well as inspectors and regulators, can rely on the Report as

a full and true picture of Social Services in its area. There will also need to be robust challenge built into its development’.

6.2 In the information provided through the self assessment process all respondents reported that the annual reporting framework had been implemented and that as a minimum they viewed the report as:

- i. meeting the required time frame;
- ii. based on robust and reliable information;
- iii. evidenced citizen engagement;
- iv. could be used to inform children adults and families about services provide;
- v. recognisable by those working in the service as an accurate picture of Social Services; and
- vi. the report was a lever for improvement within the council.

Examples provided from the self assessments included;

- “ • The ACRF process requires Group Managers and Heads of Service to review performance and activity data to ensure that it is robust. Performance data is received monthly by the Heads of Service at their Management Teams and at the Directorate Senior Management Teams which met monthly (SMT performance reports).
- The ACRF process is actively challenged by the ‘Access for All forums’ whose members include service users and carers. There is challenge event with a range of Political and Corporate challenge.
- The ACRF process has been aligned to the authorities business planning process so that areas identified for further improvement are reflected in the directorate/service business plans (directorate business plans provide evidence of this).

- The scrutiny committees form a joint panel to consider the draft report and feedback is used to inform the final draft (joint scrutiny report on draft report). ”

6.3 The inspection field work was undertaken some months after the self assessments. In the context of this report inspectors were interested in the significance attributed to the Annual Reporting Framework as a mechanism for raising the profile of Social Services and for providing additional assurance that the Statutory Director of Social Services was sufficiently supported.

6.4 The field work identified that across the 7 authorities visited:

- i. the ACRF was still relatively new and often described as evolving;
- ii. the significance attributed by the council to the Statutory Director’s annual report was variable although some now viewed it as a significant corporate priority;
- iii. where this was the case the process had become more embedded and was viewed as an integral part of the authority’s planning processes for both children’s and adult’s services;
- iv. where corporate performance management systems were well established this enabled information to be collected and validated throughout the year;
- v. where the annual report was viewed as a shared priority it regularly featured on the Corporate Management agenda and resources were provided through the corporate infrastructure;
- vi. in those authorities with less well developed corporate arrangements there was a reported over reliance on Social Services staff to manage the process. The demands on managers time had the potential to adversely impact on the resilience of services;
- vii. scrutiny appeared to have been built into the process in most structural configurations and in some authorities this included cross cutting ‘constructive challenge’ events, however these were often undertaken late in the process; and

viii. authorities systems to engage directly with staff partners and service users were very variable and often not well developed.

6.5 The Annual Report process therefore in many ways directly reflected the significance attributed to the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services by the council and the effectiveness of the systems put in place to support the post holder to deliver against their accountabilities.

the Statutory Director. However, particularly where arrangements did not fully reflect the statutory guidance, the Director appeared to be meeting their accountabilities despite the corporate arrangements rather than as a consequence of them. The statutory guidance was issued in order to support the accountabilities of the role of the Statutory Director of Social Services. Local authorities therefore need to assure themselves that their arrangements are compliant and act to fully secure the position of the Statutory Director of Social Services.

7 Overall Conclusion

7.1 In relation to the fieldwork question of 'How the different organisational structures and models of delivery impacted upon, the fulfilment of, the role of the Statutory Director Social Services'. No one structural configuration appeared to confer significant advantages in terms of its effectiveness in supporting or securing the role of

Fieldwork Methodology

Scope of Inspection: Following the principle of proportionality the fieldwork was undertaken:–

- a) In 7 Local Authorities chosen to reflect different council configurations.
- b) The field work to consist of three days of onsite fieldwork.
- c) The fieldwork was carried out concurrently by three teams over a 2 week period. Each team consisting of a full time CSSIW inspector and a peer reviewer (a current or former Director of Social Services).
- d) Following the fieldwork a moderation process was undertaken to ensure consistency of approach and analysis.
- e) Regional inspectors to attend for one day including the formal presentations by the authority.
- f) An overview report to be published in April 2013.
- g) These findings will help inform the development of the Social Services Bill and regulations.
- h) Written feedback to fieldwork sites to be provided in January 2013 and as part of CSSIW's established programme of meetings with Local authorities.

Fieldwork sites identified:–

Pilot

Date	Local Authority
October 2012	Bridgend

Date	Local Authority
December 2012	Wrexham
	Caerphilly
	Carmarthen
	Gwynedd
	Powys
	Monmouth

Methodology

The fieldwork comprised of:–

Review of core documents – these to include:–

- any framework documents that set out the roles accountabilities of the Director of Social Services and the rest of the authority;
- Constitution setting out interrelationships and delegations;
- job description person specification identifying competencies;
- reports to elected members (see group exercise);
- other as identified as relevant by the authority.

Interviews with the following:–

- Head of Paid Service.
- Director Social Services.

Interview with other directors to include:–

- Lead Director Children and Young People.
- Director Education.
- Director HR.
- Interviews with Heads of Children Services, Adult Services and Housing Services.
- Quality Assurance/Performance Manager (most appropriate person/s to be identified by the authority).
- Group interview with key representatives from partner agencies authority to identify those best placed to discuss the; **'arrangements in place for Social Services to work effectively with others, both within and outside the authority, in fulfilling its Social Services functions and in contributing to the achievement of wider policy objectives'**.
- Leader, portfolio holders (group interview).
- Scrutiny chairs (group interview).

A template interview schedule will be provided to all field work sites.

Group exercise

A presentation that leads the inspectorate through a recent report prepared for elected members.

(Local authorities to determine the example) in relation to each of the following core accountabilities of the Director of Social Services.

- The core accountabilities of the Director of Social Services secure sound child and adult safeguarding arrangements and effective reporting arrangements.
- The core accountabilities of the Director of Social Services secure strong performance management and improvement arrangements and effective reporting arrangements.
- The core accountabilities of the Director of Social Services secure strong leadership in workforce planning and professional development for Social Services with effective reporting arrangements.

It is requested that the key contributors to each of the reports will attend and participate in the presentation to explain their role and accountabilities regarding the process.

Aim of the three presentations

- To gauge the adequacy of the reciprocal arrangements between the Director of Social Services and other senior officers within the council necessary for the fulfillment of the accountabilities vested in the post holder.

The authority was asked to identify the most appropriate person to co-ordinate each of the presentations. A copy of each of the reports to be provided as part of the pre reading information.

Presentations to include

- strategic/operational driver for the report;
- intended outcome from the report;
- who contributed to the report and in what form;
- who co-ordinated the responses;
- how do those contributing to the report quality assure the information provided;
- what quality assurance systems are in place for the Director of Social Services to satisfy themselves regarding the information;
- how is the information analysed and brought together in the report;
- how is the report shared with others including those who contributed to it;
- Any challenges, learning, barriers and how these were resolved.

The Inspection Team

CSSIW

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CSSIW would particularly like to acknowledge and thank the following peer reviewers for their contribution to this inspection.

Peer Reviewers

Graham Williams	Former Chief Inspector SSIW
Sally Ellis	Corporate Director Modernisation and Wellbeing (Statutory Director of Social Services) Denbighshire County Council
Ellis Williams	Group Director (Community and Children's Services) (Statutory Director of Social Services) Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council