care inspectorate

Corporate Plan 2026-2031

Working together towards a sustainable future for social care and social work in Scotland

The Care Inspectorate's vision, mission and values

Our vision

The Care Inspectorate's vision is that everyone in Scotland experiences high-quality, compassionate care, support and learning when they need it, which upholds their rights and choices.

Our mission

To achieve our vision and provide public assurance about the quality of social care services and social work, we will:

- ensure those who experience care and support - and their communities - are at the heart of all that we do
- register, inspect and resolve complaints about social care services
- work to ensure experiences and outcomes promote and uphold individual rights
- support services to continuously improve through effective self-evaluation and quality improvement
- actively share learning and good practice from and to the sector
- take action where we see people are not being cared for safely and their outcomes are not being met
- keep the public informed and assured about the quality of social care across Scotland.

Our values

Person-centred:
we will put people, compassion and kindness at the heart of everything we do.

Impact:
we focus on making a positive impact for everyone experiencing care in Scotland whilst ensuring our work delivers the best value to the public.

Respect:
we value everyone's dignity and are respectful in everything we do.

Equity:
we embrace diversity and nurture an inclusive environment where everyone is supported to achieve equal outcomes.

Integrity:
we act impartially, fairly and consistently, upholding transparency and accountability in all our actions.

Our strategic outcomes to achieve our vision

- **Assure and improve**
- **Involve and inform**
- **Uphold and champion people's rights.**

We will maximise our impact through our:

- **Workforce and volunteers**
- **Digital and data.**

Introduction

The Care Inspectorate is the assurance and improvement support body for social care services and social work in Scotland.

This means that we:

- register care services for children, young people, adults and older people in Scotland
- inspect these services, using our quality frameworks and the Health and Social Care Standards, and publish our findings
- receive and resolve complaints about registered social care services
- act to support better outcomes when we find that care does not meet people's needs and wishes
- support ongoing improvement in social care and social work services
- carry out strategic and joint inspections with partners across local areas for services for children and young people, adults, older people and justice.

Our activity is risk-based, proportionate and evidence-led. This ensures it is targeted where it is needed most while undertaking our statutory responsibilities.

Those experiencing care – and their communities – are at the heart of all we do. Our work is informed by their needs and voices.

We work to understand and reflect the different contexts that services operate within, and we continue to learn and improve as an organisation.

We want care to have a positive impact on people's lives. We are committed to working with services to support the highest possible standards for those experiencing care and support.

We provide public assurance that the quality of care and support in Scotland is meeting people's needs.

Our sustainability strategy will set out our plan to reduce our emissions and contribute to reaching net zero by 2045.

Our strategic outcomes to achieve our vision: assure and improve

We will deliver robust, independent evaluation of the quality of care, support, play and learning to provide public assurance. We will work with the social care sector and our social work partners to identify areas for improvement, and we will support this across the sector.

Over the next five years, we will prioritise:

- improving the way we use our data and plan our work to fulfil our statutory duties and deploy our resources where they are needed the most.
- developing new ways of working – informed by those experiencing care – to provide assurance and to support services, local authorities, partnerships and communities.
- focusing our quality improvement work where it can have the greatest impact.
- supporting the sector to carry out high-quality self-evaluation to continuously improve.

Our strategic outcomes to achieve our vision: involve and inform

We will be a trusted source of information and guidance on the quality of care. We will enable the voices of those experiencing care and their communities to be heard and to influence our work.

Over the next five years, we will prioritise:

- meaningfully involving people who experience care and support to develop new, inclusive and accessible ways to reach them and use their views to inform our work.
- using and sharing the data and information we gather from the sector to inform the understanding of care as well as our work.
- sharing good practice from the sector and our own work to develop an understanding of high-quality care and how to achieve and sustain it.
- working with our partners and other bodies to ensure that social care and social work have a voice and can shape policy that affects them.

Our strategic outcomes to achieve our vision: uphold and champion rights

We will strengthen our understanding of people's rights and keep them central to everything we do.

Over the next five years, we will prioritise:

- collaborating with partners across the social work, social care, education and health sectors to promote and uphold rights.
- promoting an understanding of what those experiencing care and their communities have a right to expect.
- embedding a compassionate, trauma-informed and trauma-responsive approach.
- further strengthening an equalities and human rights-based approach into all our work and interactions.

As an organisation we are committed to continuing to play our part in supporting:

- Corporate parenting
- The promise
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)
- Getting it right for everyone (GIRFE)
- Anne's Law
- National Dementia Strategy.

Keeping the promise at the heart of what we do

Maximising our impact: through our workforce and volunteers

Our workforce, processes and systems underpin everything that we do. Investing in these will ensure that we are efficient, effective and collaborative to strengthen our impact on people's lives.

Our values and cultural aspirations guide our work and ensure people remain at the heart of everything we do. We will lead the Care Inspectorate to influence and respond to changes over the next five years ensuring our organisation is governed effectively. We will support our workforce to be motivated and empowered to move forward together and achieve our shared vision.

Over the next five years, we will prioritise:

- embracing a positive and inclusive environment where we listen to, learn with and empower our staff and volunteers.
- improving our planning to support our workforce, make the best use of our resources and maximise our impact.
- strengthening how we collaborate – internally and externally – to learn from and support the sector with expertise, information and guidance.
- continually listening, learning, and improving what we do in a compassionate, trauma-informed way.

Our values

Person-centred
we put people, empathy, compassion, and kindness at the heart of everything we do

Respect
we value everyone's dignity and are respectful in everything we do

Integrity
we act impartially, fairly, and consistently, upholding transparency and accountability in all our actions

Equity
we embrace diversity and nurture an inclusive environment where everyone is supported to achieve equal outcomes

Impact
we focus on making a positive impact for everyone experiencing care in Scotland whilst ensuring our work delivers the best value to the public

Our cultural aspirations

Performance and delivery
we work together to optimise our capacity and ability to improve the lives of those experiencing care whilst also supporting work-life balance

Trust and empowerment
we empower and trust each other. We are open and honest. We feel able to provide and receive respectful challenge

Accountability
everyone is responsible and accountable for their actions. We live our values in all we say and do

Listening, learning and improving
we seek feedback and use it to improve. We continuously learn and develop. We are innovative, and creative. We trial new ideas

Inclusion and belonging
we are inclusive. We ensure everyone feels heard, valued and recognised. We support and encourage each other to prioritise wellbeing

Shaping the future
we understand that change is inevitable. We are commited to engaging with change with openess and working together positively to shape our future. We embrace adaptability as a key skill

Connection and collaboration
we connect and collaborate, working together to share knowledge, support, continuous improvement and overcome challenges

Maximising our impact: digital and data

Digital transformation is essential to the delivery of our strategic outcomes and supporting services to improve the quality of care people experience across Scotland. We are modernising our ways of working with a new accessible and efficient digital platform that supports our activity.

> "Working together, we can build a more efficient, secure, and sustainable future for social care and social work in Scotland – one that puts people first and ensures that every voice is heard."

Our digital transformation is about improving how we work and collaborate with those experiencing care and their communities, and with the sector.

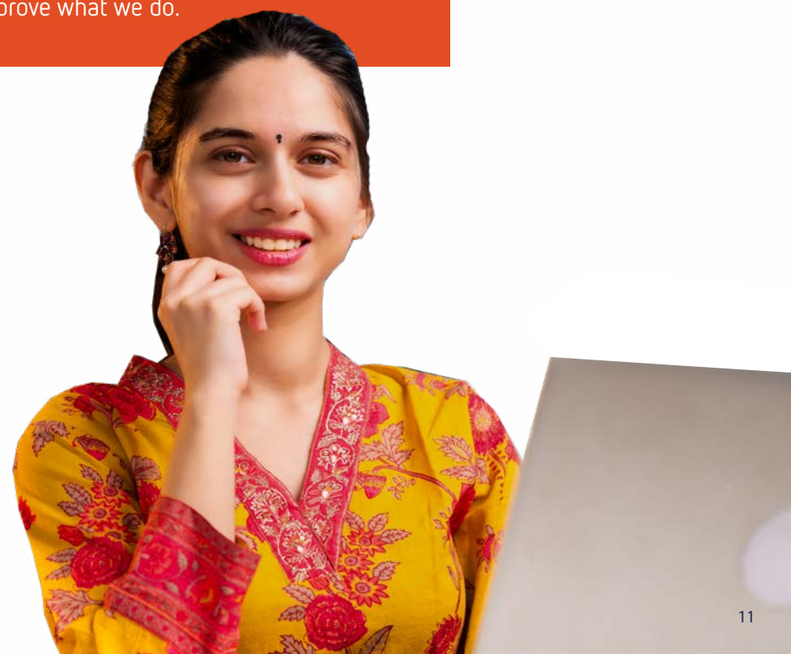
We are also working to ensure that all our information is accurate, timely, and used responsibly.

Over the next five years, we will prioritise:

- embracing technology to use our resources more efficiently and focus our time where it matters the most.
- enabling and supporting service providers to securely access, update, and share vital information.
- enhancing public engagement, offering people experiencing care, their families, and the wider public more opportunities to share their views directly with us and access information.
- improving public assurance through transparent and data-driven reporting.

Longer-term investment in digital and data

- This transformation marks the beginning of a sustained, long-term strategic investment in our digital capabilities. We are building an organisation that will adapt to evolving needs, embrace emerging technologies, and continuously improve what we do.



Performance measures

We will measure our progress towards achieving the strategic outcomes and key areas set out in the Corporate Plan 2026-2031 through a set of key performance indicators and key outcome indicators. These measures will be reviewed and developed to ensure they continue to support delivery of the corporate plan during its five-year period.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are specific and quantifiable measures against which our performance can be assessed:

- KPI 1 - % of people telling us that our scrutiny supports improvements in care.
- KPI 2 - % statutory inspections completed.
- KPI 3 - % services outwith desired frequency.
- KPI 4 - % registrations completed within timescales.
- KPI 5 - % of complaints about care we investigated that were resolved within the relevant timescales (40 days).
- KPI 6 - % of assurance and improvement interventions and consultation that include direct input from people who experience care and their families.
- KPI 7 - % of responses confirming our staff take a trauma-informed approach.
- KPI 8 - Development of new care standards. Year 1: % frameworks revised. Year 2: % of frameworks implemented.
- KPI 9 - % staff absence.
- KPI 10 - % staff turnover.
- KPI 11 - average time to write an inspection report.
- KPI 12 - % services onboarded to new digital system.

Key Outcome Indicators (KOIs) are measures that we aim to influence by our work, but which we may have limited control over:

- KOI 1 - % services with good or better grades (across all key questions).
- KOI 2 - % services with >90% people telling us they are happy with the quality of care and support they receive.
- KOI 3 - % of services with expected grades or better.
- KOI 4 - % of services good or better for key question 1: how well do we support people's wellbeing?

National Performance Framework

All our work supports the delivery of the National Performance Framework and is focused on delivering the National Outcomes. Our work has a particular emphasis on creating opportunities for everyone living in Scotland, improving their wellbeing, reducing inequalities, and achieving social progress.

Our work also supports the delivery of the Scottish Government's priorities as set out in the Programme for Government and the delivery of the wellbeing economy through its Economic Strategy.

Links to other plans and strategies that will help us achieve our vision:

- Scrutiny and Assurance strategy and plan
- Quality Improvement and Participation plan
- Financial strategy
- Children's rights, care experience and corporate parenting plan 2024-27
- Equality outcomes action plan 2025-29
- Sustainability plan
- Learning and development plan
- Strategic workforce plan

Glossary of definitions

People who experience care: When we talk about people in our corporate plan, we are referring to all those who experience social care and social work throughout their life journey. This can be people of all ages – babies, infants, children, young people, adults and older people – and incudes their family, friends and those closest to them who may also provide care and support.

Social care: Social care support services are about providing people with the support and assistance they need to lead a full and active life. Social care support is delivered in a variety of settings, including people's own homes, their local communities and care homes, by a mixed economy of public sector and independent services. Social care support is one part of a wider system, that includes social work services, housing, third sector, children's services, early learning and childcare provision and community health. (Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation of Social Care in Scotland final report (2023))

Social work: The International Federation of Social Workers' global definition of social work is "a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work."

High-quality care: For people to experience high-quality care they should be treated with dignity, respect, compassion, feel included, and experience responsive, person-centred care. This should support their mental health, wellbeing and safety. Care should be innovative, support positive outcomes for people, strive for excellence and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

Person-centred: Person-centred care is about ensuring the people who use services are at the centre of everything we do. Putting the person at the centre, identifying what is important in their life, ensuring that everyone is working together to achieve the same purpose of maximising the person's independence and quality of life. (Iriss: Reshaping care and support planning for outcomes)

Scrutiny: The process by which we register, inspect or investigate services. Scrutiny is underpinned by legislation and standards, and we have a number of quality frameworks which support us to assess how well services are performing.

Strategic scrutiny and joint inspections: We undertake joint and strategic inspections either on our own or with partners. These inspections focus on the scrutiny, assurance and improvement of services provided by local authority social work services and partnerships. They look at services for children and families, adults and older people and people involved with the justice system. The inspections explore how adults' and children's rights are promoted and upheld, the extent to which they are enabled to exercise choice and control in how their support is provided, and the outcomes they experience.

Quality improvement: We support quality improvement across social care, social work, local health and social care partnerships as well as early learning and childcare. We take a whole-system, collaborative approach to quality improvement – this involves identifying themes and trends from our scrutiny activities and responding to these with a targeted approach to quality improvement. Quality improvement is about giving the people closest to issues affecting care quality the time, permission, skills and resources they need to solve them. It involves a systematic and coordinated approach to solving a problem using specific methods and tools with the aim of bringing about a measurable improvement. (Quality improvement made simple)

Outcomes-focused: The term 'outcome' is now in common usage in health and social care, reflecting a commitment to ensure systems support people using services and unpaid carers in ways that are person centred and effective. Outcomes are defined as what matters to people using services, as well as the end result or impact of activities, and can be used to both determined and evaluate activity. Personal outcomes are identified through good conversations with people using services during assessment and support planning. It is also critical that the outcomes are reviewed, to ensure the continued relevance of support and services, and to support service planning, commissioning and improvement. (Scottish Government National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes (2015))

Scotland: When we talk about Scotland, we are referring to the provision of care and support across the whole of Scotland. We want everyone to experience high-quality care wherever they are, and we work to reflect the different context experienced in mainland Scotland, the remote and rural areas, and the island communities.

Rights-based: Rights-based approaches (RBAs) are frameworks that integrate human rights principles into policies and practices, empowering individuals and communities to claim their rights and hold duty-bearers accountable.

The role of a human rights-based approach is to ensure that the dignity of the individual is at the centre of policy and decision making. Where it is applied everyone affected will have an opportunity to help think through how human rights can best be realised in the delivery of care and support services. (Scottish Human Rights Commission)

Mainstreaming equalities: We are dedicated to mainstreaming equality: mainstreaming ensures that equality considerations are embedded into our policies, decision-making processes, and day-to-day operations, rather than being treated as separate or additional obligations. We have also agreed as an organisation to work towards acknowledging care experience as a protected characteristic. This approach reflects our belief that advancing equality and protecting human rights are fundamental to achieving a fairer, more inclusive Scotland. By prioritising this work, we aim to address systemic inequalities, foster cultural change, while fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

Trauma-informed approach: A trauma-informed approach means anticipating, understanding and responding to the impact of an individual's experience of trauma, including their mental health and wellbeing. In working in a trauma-informed way, we aim to create the conditions to anticipate what might be difficult or retraumatising for someone to cause least harm and support their recovery. (National Trauma Transformation Programme)

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