Public Services Reform (Social Work Complaints Procedure) (Scotland) Order 2016

Fife Health and Social Care partnership

1. Do you support the new regulations?
   Yes

2. What are your views on Local Authority Complaints Review Committees being replaced?

   In principle the proposal to replace Local Authority Complaints Review Committees provides an opportunity for consistency of approach to dealing with complaint across Scotland.

   Further details on this would be necessary before a decision could be made to fully support the proposal.

3. What are your views on the SPSO being given a new role to investigate social work complaints?

   The proposed changes would result in Social Work Complaints following the same procedure as other Local Authority complaints. This will simplify complaint handling processes across the Council, and provide a single set of complaint handling standards across the council.

   It should be acknowledged that there is a danger of multiple investigation of social work complaints by the various agencies including: Care Inspectorate, SSSC, Children’s Commissioner as well as any internal investigation by local authorities. The roles of the various agencies in this process should be clarified and clearly defined to avoid confusion and the need for potential multiple inquiries.

4. What are your views on the SPSO being given a remit to consider the professional judgment of social work staff?

   It seems sensible to broaden the role of the SPSO to cover matters of professional judgement in the same way as other professions. We agree that the SPSO will need to seek guidance from those with Social Work expertise, and that the SPSO should not be responsible for the conduct of Social Work staff as this will rightly remain with the SSSC.

5. What are your views on how these proposals relate to the approach currently taken to complaints relating to the NHS and the consideration of complaints relating to Integrated Joint Boards?

   It will be helpful, and clearer for customers to have a standard process in the context of Health and Social Care Integration to avoid different organisations working to different arrangements. This will make it easier to manage complaints which may cut across both Health and Social Care services.

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