

National Care Service Bill

National Social Work Agency

The National Social Work Agency (NSWA) will be established as part of the National Care Service (NCS) at national level. It will cover all social work functions, regardless of the ultimate decision about whether children and/or justice services will be included in the NCS.

The NSWA will contribute to meeting the Scottish Ministers' duties to provide a National Care Service that reflects its principles and human rights-based approach. It will also monitor and improve the quality of services that the NCS provides.

The NSWA will lead on workforce planning for social workers and social work students. Its objectives will be to support and invest in the social work profession by providing national leadership and overseeing and supporting social work in the following areas:

- education (pre- and post-qualifying)
- improvement (by establishing a Centre of Excellence) and scaling up good practice
- training and development
- social work terms and conditions (including pay)

The Scottish Government did consider proposing a NSWA independent of the NCS. For example, adding the NSWA's remit to existing bodies such as the SSSC or the Care Inspectorate. This was ruled out since both these bodies already have distinct remits that go beyond social work.

They also considered establishing a new body totally separate from Scottish Government. However, they felt that this would prevent the functions of the NSWA from being well integrated with other parts of the NCS.

The policy memorandum states that: "Consequently, in order to retain the national dimension, reduce the financial costs and in response to high levels of support from stakeholders as detailed above, it is proposed to locate the NSWA within the NCS."