# Summary of Social Work Governance and Assurance Review Across Scotland

## Key Messages

The Care Inspectorate's 2024 review of social work governance and assurance arrangements across Scotland identified several key findings:

1. **Governance arrangements** are generally effective despite being complex, with most staff understanding reporting lines. Dedicated social work governance boards -the body responsible for ensuring the quality and accountability of social work services, typically including the Chief Social Work Officer, and other relevant stakeholders- where they exist, enhance oversight.
2. **Social work influence** is sometimes limited within Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), with health priorities often dominating. Chief Social Work Officers (CSWOs) play a key role in amplifying social work's voice.
3. **Social work values** are upheld by staff at all levels, with SSSC Codes of Practice being key reference points for ethical practice.
4. **Assurance mechanisms** are mostly effective, though performance reporting does not always capture the full breadth of social work activity, particularly in adult services.
5. **Significant challenges exist** regarding staffing and financial resources, with recruitment and retention being critical issues nationwide, amplified in rural and island settings.
6. **Staff support systems** are generally effective, with supervision arrangements working well, though increasing caseload complexity impacts staff wellbeing.

## Key National Challenges

The review highlighted three significant national concerns:

1. Social work services struggle to match supply with increasing demand and complex need, risking their ability to fulfil statutory duties.
2. Traditional relationship-based practice is being replaced by more transactional engagement, particularly in adult social work.
3. A national approach is needed urgently to address the recruitment and retention crisis and ensure social work sustainability.

The report includes reflective questions for social work leaders and suggests that Scotland's National Social Work Agency presents an opportunity to address these systemic challenges.