

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr Tumbull

SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE

In case Mr. Fowler raises it with you tomorrow, you may like to be aware of the attached letter from him to Patrick Jenkin, in which he sought colleagues' approval to convert his Department's Social Work Service into an inspectorate for local authority personal social services.

This proposal has run into vigorous opposition from both the Treasury and the Department of the Environment, on the grounds that it would be an additional burden on local authorities. Mr. Jenkin is also concerned that a professional inspectorate could easily become a lobby for higher levels of spending.

In the light of the opposition from colleagues, Mr. Fowler is re-thinking his approach.

Dms

6 February 1984



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

01-212 3434

My ref: J/PSO/10552/84

Your ref:

6 February 1984

Dear Secretary of State

Thank you for your letter of 20 January with which you enclosed a draft of the statement you propose to issue jointly with the local Authority Associations on the establishment of an inspectorate for local authority personal social services.

Whilst I can well appreciate your desire to strengthen the existing Social Works Service, there could not be a more inopportune moment at which to launch the proposed inspectorate on local authorities. In the context of our rate limitation proposals we are resisting growing pressures for the establishment of minimum standards for local government services. The announcement of the proposed inspectorate could only reinforce this pressure. In addition, professional inspectorates are all too often transformed into lobbies for improved standards and their recommendations can also be used to justify existing spending levels. In the RSG debate last month, for example, a number of our backbench colleagues argued that their shire authorities were low spenders on the basis of work done by the H M Inspectorate of Schools and the Fire Inspectorate. In view of this I must ask you to consider delaying any announcement at least until the Rates Bill is on the statute book.

I should add that I am also concerned about the relationship between your inspectorate and the Audit Commission for local authorities. I have asked my officials to write to yours to explore ways of avoiding any duplication of effort.

/ I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Jenkin
for PATRICK JENKIN

*Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence.*

National Health - NHS expenditure - efficiency A2



7 FEB 1984



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY
 Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY
 Telephone 01-407 5522
 From the Secretary of State for Social Services

copy
 CF: Await further letter
 from Patrick Jenkin
 Prime Minister 27/11
 Content for Mr Fowler
 to make the attached
 statement, announcing
 the

The Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP
 Secretary of State for the Environment
 Department of the Environment
 2 Marsham Street
 LONDON SW1

July 20 1984

Dear Patrick,


AN INSPECTORATE FOR THE PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Last April I wrote to Tom King about consultative proposals for developing my Department's Social Work Service (which already exercises some statutory powers of inspection) explicitly into an inspectorate for the local authority personal social services. The aim is to steer authorities into making the most effective use of existing professional and other resources, and to disseminate good practice.

We have now had all the responses to the consultative paper which I enclosed with my letter of 7 April, and Kenneth Clarke has discussed our conclusions with the local authority associations. Although there have been some doubts and comments on points of detail, the general aim has been widely welcomed. We have been able to enlist the support of the LA associations - an essential step in securing the co-operation from individual authorities on which the success of the inspectorate will depend.

I therefore propose to go ahead with implementing the proposals for an inspectorate in the consultative paper: if colleagues have any comments, I shall be glad to receive them within the next 10 days. I enclose a copy of a statement I propose to issue jointly with the LA associations at a convenient opportunity in January.

I am sending a copy of this letter and the enclosure to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Leon Brittan, Peter Rees, Keith Joseph, Nicholas Edwards, George Younger, Jim Prior and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

 NORMAN FOWLER

SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE: DRAFT JOINT STATEMENT WITH THE LA ASSOCIATIONS

1. In April 1983, the Secretary of State sent to the Chairman of all Social Services Committees a consultative document proposing development of the Department's Social Work Service - which already exercises inspectorial functions - explicitly into an inspectorate for the local authority personal social services. In the light of a wide range of helpful comments on the consultative document, the Government has now reached agreement in principle with the local authority associations on the way forward.

2. The aim of the Social Services Inspectorate will be to assist authorities in making the most effective use of existing professional and other resources, and to spread good practice. This is more than ever necessary at a time when these resources are under heavy and increasing pressure.

3. Inspections will be of 3 main types:-

a. initiated by Ministers and the Department in exercise of the Secretary of State's formal powers of inspection;

b. issues of general concern outside formal powers and covering a number of local authorities, by agreement with the authorities concerned, and in accordance with a programme agreed by the LA associations; and

c. requested by individual local authorities to cover specific services or activities.

Reports written as a result of formal inspections would be made in the first instance to the Secretary of State, but all other reports would be concurrently to the authorities concerned for their Social Services Committee to see.

Reports would normally be documents of public access.

4. Formally, the existing statutory powers of inspection (which are considered sufficient for the purposes of the new Inspectorate) are vested in the Secretary of State, and he will be the Minister responsible for the Inspectorate's management and actions. In practice, however, the operation of the Inspectorate outside formal powers will be a joint concern of central and local government. This will be reflected in a Steering Group of the Government and the local authority associations, whose detailed terms of reference are under discussion with the associations.

The staff of the Social Services Inspectorate will consist of members of the existing Social Work Service, supplemented by staff on attachment from local authorities, and when appropriate from other organisations and other relevant disciplines. The Inspectorate will continue existing collaboration with HM Inspectorate of Schools, and the Probation Inspectorate.

6. Inspections envisaged in 1984 under these new arrangements are:-

- a. services for elderly mentally disordered people - an inter-disciplinary study under statutory powers of up to 5 authorities, based on residential homes;
- b. a formal inspection under statutory powers of community homes for children covering 10% of homes and 25% of authorities; and
- c. the home help service - a background study and investigation of services being provided.

NKS
Expenditure
P2

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QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

20 February 1984

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AN INSPECTORATE FOR THE PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 20 January to Patrick Jenkin about the outcome of your consultations on developing your Department's social work service explicitly into an Inspectorate for the local authority personal social services.

I was interested to learn the results and I welcome the proposal for the creation of a Social Services Inspectorate. You refer in your draft joint statement to the continuation of existing collaboration with HM Inspectorate of Schools and the Probation Inspectorate. I know that the Probation Inspectorate greatly value the co-operation which currently exists, especially in the field of juvenile offenders, and you will know that a joint programme involving inspection of social work and the probation service practice in the handling of supervision orders in two areas has recently been agreed. I am sure it will be right to build on and develop these contacts as part of our joint response to the problems of juvenile crime. The Probation Inspectorate would be glad to help the developing Social Services Inspectorate on all matters where there is a common interest.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

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The Rt Hon Norman Fowler, MP



SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
Department of Health and Social Security
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant and Castle
LONDON
SE1 6BY

Await DofE

February 1984

Dear Norman,

INSPECTORATE FOR THE PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 20 January to Patrick Jenkin about your proposal to constitute an inspectorate for the personal social services.

I have no objection to your proposals and I am content with the terms of the draft statement.

I am at present considering whether similar arrangements should be introduced in Scotland. There is a case for doing so but in present circumstances it may not be easy to reach agreement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on a more interventionist approach. I note that your proposals are dependent to a large extent on co-operation by the local authority associations.

There is no great urgency in Scotland since, under present arrangements, my Department is able to keep closely in touch with the relatively small number of social work authorities. I hope to reach a conclusion later in the year.

Copies of this letter go to the recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely,
George

Nat Health exp R1 2

10/1/84

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