

Thursday 13 September 2018

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ARE INADEQUATE

Comptroller and Auditor General issues latest report

Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) Karen McConnell has today, 13 September 2018, published a report on *Governance Arrangements for Health and Social Care*.

The C&AG evaluated the effectiveness of arrangements for the governance of health and social care, reflecting governance structures in place up to May 2018. She also considered how the States developed proposals for changing the governance of health and social care.

Karen McConnell concluded that arrangements were inadequate. At an overall system level they were overly complex for a relatively small health and social care system and at the same time poorly defined and communicated.

She found that in many respects the Integrated Governance Committee, that had key responsibilities for securing clinical governance, was not fit for purpose. It failed to develop a strategy and plans, failed to review its own Terms of Reference, did not oversee an effective clinical and care audit programme and did not take an effective role in monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

She also expressed concern that:

- there has been insufficient impetus to implement independent regulation and inspection of all health and social care provision, including that provided by the States, as an essential means of securing quality and providing assurance;
- proposals for structural change were developed without a clear, documented evaluation of current arrangements and without a clear trail from the analysis undertaken by the consultants to the proposal developed;
- there has been insufficient focus on the development and operation of comprehensive systems to monitor the quality and outcomes of health and social care services;

- there has been insufficient focus on the effective use of complaints and whistleblowing as tools of governance;
- the availability and scope of public reporting of performance has been inadequate and on occasions reporting has been inaccurate;
- there has been insufficient focus on the implementation of agreed recommendations from internal and external reviews; and
- arrangements for the preparation, maintenance, review and challenge of risk registers relating to health and social care, a key tool of effective governance, have been inadequate.

She goes on to make a number of recommendations to improve overall arrangements including through focussing on service objectives and outcomes for users, effective performance management, promoting the values of good governance, demonstrating values through behaviours and taking informed, transparent decisions.

Karen McConnell said:

“Strong and effective governance is of major importance in the delivery of health and social care. The impact of failings in this area has been highlighted in numerous reports in Jersey and in other jurisdictions. I am concerned that urgent action needs to be taken in Jersey to ensure that health and social care governance is fit for purpose.

“I have reported before on the impact of silo working. In this case structures seemed to be based around historic issues including funding flows rather than the needs of patients and service users. Responsibility was split between three departments with different ministerial accountabilities without strong system wide oversight to identify future needs, provide assurance on current delivery, maintain effective relationships with the voluntary and private sectors and drive change. This oversight is not something that can simply be driven by a corporate management team. It requires specialist knowledge and expertise.

“In many previous reports I have referred to the impact of culture both on preventing and in driving change. Effective governance is dependent on a strong culture driven by management that promotes worthwhile change, encourages challenge and embraces learning. In health and social care it is essential that staff have the confidence to speak out knowing that colleagues will respect and welcome challenge. It is also essential that this culture embraces learning from all sources including the effective use of complaints and whistleblowing. A consistent focus on making a learning, responsive culture a reality must be a top priority.



“I have discussed my major findings from this review with the Chief Executive and other Chief Officers during the past few months. Officers have been listening and I understand that steps are being taken to address some of the major issues raised. Although the structural changes already made by the Chief Executive should simplify structures, there is much work to do to rationalise, clarify, communicate and implement the underlying governance structures going forward. The cultural changes needed will take time to be introduced and become embedded.”

The report will be available on the Jersey Audit Office’s website from 0930 on Thursday 13 September at (www.jerseyauditoffice.je).

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Notes to Editors:

- The Office of Comptroller and Auditor General ('C&AG') was established in 2005 and operates under the Comptroller and Auditor General (Jersey) Law 2014
- The remit of the C&AG includes the audit of financial statements and wider consideration of public funds, often expressed as 'value for money'
- Karen McConnell was appointed in 2013 and the term of office was extended in 2014 to December 2019
- Formerly of the UK Audit Commission ('the Commission'), Karen held a variety of senior positions, including leading the Audit Practice
- The Office of Comptroller & Auditor General is known as the 'Jersey Audit Office'
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- Press releases will be published by the Jersey Audit Office to accompany the publication of each report
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- With any report issued, the opportunity is available for members of the press to request factual clarification, by email, of points contained therein
- Any comments made additional to any reports, will be included within any press release(s) as issued by the Jersey Audit Office, in the form of a quotation by the C&AG. These comments will be available for publication; but there will not be any supplementary live or pre-recorded interviews offered or undertaken by either Karen McConnell or the employees of the Jersey Audit Office
- The C&AG is prepared, on an occasional basis, to provide articles for publication in the local media, following a specific request and consideration of the relevant topic
- All public information, including press releases and reports, are accessible on the Jersey Audit Office website at www.jerseyauditoffice.je

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