

Advice Note: Local Area Networks and the CLD Regulations 2013

The Local Area Network (LAN) comprises all relevant scrutiny bodies for local government. The purpose of the LAN is to share intelligence and work together to identify and agree scrutiny risks for each local authority.

The scrutiny bodies currently involved are Audit Scotland (which is leading on this work), Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, the Scottish Housing Regulator, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland and HM Fire Service Inspectorate.

It is not a public grouping (ie names of those sitting on it, minutes etc are not publically accessible) and serves primarily to ensure that scrutiny measures are appropriately targeted and an overall shared understanding of risk is in place.

At LAN meetings, LAN members discuss the collated evidence. The aims of the meeting are to:

- discuss the evidence sources/ information provided by each scrutiny body and agree the risk assessment for each relevant area
- identify all opportunities for joint scrutiny work and firm up the local scrutiny plan
- highlight any additional work or national scrutiny activity happening in the local authority that is not a result of the SRA process
- highlight improvement activity (e.g. supported self-evaluation) happening in the local authority.

Each LAN, in discussion with the local authority's Chief Executive, develops an annual Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) for the LA based upon various intelligence gathered by the scrutiny bodies (eg Inspection reports) and the LA's self-evaluation. The SRA identifies strengths, areas of uncertainty, or weaknesses within all aspects of the council's services, functions, governance, financial, and decision making processes.

LANs engage with Chief Executives as part of the SRA process. Initial discussions between LANs and local authorities should include:

- the key issues and challenges faced by the council
- what has changed since the previous SRA process
- how self-evaluation drives improvement and what self-evaluation information is available
- how the local authority wish to be engaged, including; the frequency of engagement, and who should be involved (e.g. chief executive, management team, elected members).

Each LAN creates a local scrutiny plan for the local authority. The local scrutiny plan (LSP) should only summarise identified scrutiny risks and/or any changes to the LAN's assessment over the last year. It should also make clear where there is any 'national' scrutiny or supported self-evaluation activity that is not the result of the

SRA process. The 32 individual local scrutiny plans are published on the Audit Scotland website in March each year.

[The current LSP for each local authority can be found here.](#)

The Education Scotland Area Lead Officer role

Education Scotland is one of the scrutiny bodies forming LAN, represented by the Area Lead Officer (ALO). In some cases they chair the LAN, known as the LAN Lead.

The ALO plays an active role in collating all relevant information and intelligence about the education aspects of a council's work as evidence to support risk assessments, including those related to community learning and development. This will be informed by discussions with local authority staff; inspection and review evidence; relevant data; and other intelligence and information gathered by Education Scotland staff.

Managers of CLD activity within local authorities or their ALEO¹'s (Community Learning and Development Manager level or equivalent) may wish to meet their ALO to ensure that each understands the other's role and context. If you do not have contact details for your ALO, please contact Education Scotland.

The CLD Regulations and the LAN

Current work on CLD plans is being undertaken as part of the CLD Regulations 2013. In some cases these plans have been referred to as a CLD Strategy or other free standing plan, while in others they may be part of a wider process such as the Community Plan.

Either way it is essential that local authorities are able to evidence as part of their annual self-evaluation how they are meeting all the requirements of the Regulations. All three year plans require to be complete by 1st September 2015.

The [LA Guidance document](#) states that "In line with other obligations, local authorities should share the completed elements of the plan with their Local Area Network (LAN)." (Section 6.9).

The mechanism for doing this is through the self-evaluation completed by the Chief Executive of each local authority to inform the SRA process. The Lead Contact identified under section 3.6 of the LA Guidance should ensure that the Chief Executive is fully briefed on work to meet the requirements of the CLD Regulations.

To aid this process, Education Scotland will write to all LA Chief Executives by the beginning of May to ensure that they are reminded of the context for the CLD Regulations and will expect to include this material in their self-evaluation. We will copy the letter to all Lead Contacts, CLD Managers and ALOs for information.

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¹ ALEO: Arm's Length External Organisation, eg Glasgow Life