

PERFORMANCE INSPECTION PROGRAMME NEARS COMPLETION

This summer will see the conclusion of SWIA's comprehensive, ground-breaking programme of performance inspections of Scottish social work services.

The programme in which SWIA systematically inspects and evaluates social work performance in each of Scotland's 32 councils was designed to support the raising of standards, making sure that services continue to improve and to make people's lives better. In 2005, three councils – Angus, Fife and South Lanarkshire – were chosen to test-drive the new process, and the full three-year programme began in 2006. By the end of 2008, performance inspection reports had been published for 25 authorities, and the remaining seven councils were all engaged at different stages of the inspection process.

Of the final seven, the Scottish Borders inspection report will be the first to be published in 2009, followed by North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire, Stirling, Renfrewshire and – last but not least – South Ayrshire towards the end of the summer.

Sharing knowledge at www.swia.gov.uk

As the emphasis of SWIA's work on local authorities' performance moves on to the follow-up inspections and self-evaluation, the unique store of knowledge gained from the performance inspections is available online at www.swia.gov.uk. Inspection reports and summaries are easily accessible in the Publications section. The Data and Analysis section provides Excel files of statistics from the performance inspections, both at local authority and national level.



As Professor Bill Whyte, Professor of Social Work Studies, University of Edinburgh, says in his introduction to the media and academic section of SWIA's website: "The site provides an excellent resource for practitioners, academics and anyone interested in the current position of service development and effectiveness across social work."

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Unified approach to scrutiny

SWIA is looking forward to working more closely than ever with partner agencies to deliver more joined-up scrutiny.

Following the statement on 6 November by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth about changes to the organisation of scrutiny bodies, Chief Social Work Inspector Alexis Jay said: “The Government’s proposals offer an improved way forward to the scrutiny of social work and social care in Scotland by bringing together three separate elements into one body.

“This unified approach should make for better assurance to the public and to Parliament that the most vulnerable in our society are properly supported

and cared for. The Social Work Inspection Agency looks forward to playing a full part in shaping the new organisation.”

The November statement followed the Government’s commitment, made a year ago, to improving scrutiny and complaint handling of public services in Scotland, in response to the Crerar Review.

SWIA is now working closely with the Scottish Government’s implementation team to deliver the required change by April 2011. Samantha Paterson (Inspection Support Manager) has been assigned full-time to the team and Ian Kerr (Inspector) is assigned there 2.5 days per week for the next few months.

FEBRUARY LAUNCH FOR SWIA SELF-EVALUATION GUIDE FOR COUNCILS

The launch of SWIA’s self-evaluation guide for social work services on 11 February will mark an important step towards supporting continuous improvement in social work services throughout Scotland.

A keynote speech by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop, will underline the importance of the new guide, which will help local authorities look at their own performance and make continuous improvements.

SWIA’s Gerry Hart is leading the team that has been developing the guide as part of a range of self-evaluation tools for councils. He says that self-evaluation is important in its own right and that it will also help SWIA to offer more proportionate inspections in the future.

Developed in full partnership with local authorities, *Changing Lives*, and the Improvement Service, the new guide will provide authorities with the ability to take SWIA’s now-familiar performance inspection model (PIM) and apply it to themselves, with support from SWIA inspectors available. The guide provides information on how to do reliable self-evaluation, and introduces an updated version of the PIM that reflects SWIA learning from carrying out the performance inspection programme. SWIA has worked to ensure that the guide is compatible with other quality systems like the Public Services Improvement Framework (PSIF) and enhances the operation of these.



The Cabinet Secretary will launch the new guide in the presence of a specially invited audience of council chief executives and social work directors. Other speakers at the event will include COSLA's Chair of Health and Well-being, Councillor Ronnie McColl, and Glasgow City Council's Service Director (Social Work), David Crawford. The afternoon session will include workshops on key issues, such as performance management.

The publication of the general guide will be followed by three 'good practice' guides, focussing on self-evaluation in commissioning practice, performance management and effective leadership. All three are currently under development and due to be published this spring.

HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS INSPECTION ON TARGET TO REPORT

Work on the thematic inspection into the management of high-risk offenders is on target for the report to be published in the first quarter of 2009.

The joint project – conducted in partnership with HM Inspectorates of Constabulary (HMICS) and Prisons (HMIP) – began last March. Phase one involved a two-month detailed case review of around 60 offenders (all presenting a high risk of harm to the public) from across 17 local authorities. Inspectors read the files and met the key staff in each case, as well as the offender himself. Meanwhile, prison inspectors reviewed risk management in five selected prisons.

Findings from this first phase helped the inspection team as they moved to the next stage: exploring the key themes of high-risk offender management in three selected local authority areas. The team set up focus groups and individual interviews with staff, senior managers and other representatives from police, housing and child protection agencies. HMICS issued a detailed questionnaire to all Scottish police forces about their practice in this kind of case.

In October, the three inspectorates hosted a national consultation event. Over 150 representatives from police, social work and other relevant agencies came together in Stirling to share their views on key themes concerning the management of such offenders. Representatives discussed the important and difficult challenges they faced and provided examples of best practice at the well-attended workshop sessions. The inspection team made detailed notes of these discussions and these have provided invaluable further evidence for the inspection.

Early on in the thematic review, lead inspector Gerry Hart told *Inspection Matters* that such a detailed study by all three agencies should lead to a '360-degree view' of the ex-prisoners in the sample. The soon-to-be-published report should provide a national picture of current strengths and weaknesses in the management of high-risk offenders, and contribute significantly to the future development of this key area.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS WELCOME SELF-EVALUATION GUIDE ON GOVERNANCE

“SWIA’s new guide is rooted in reality and will benefit the whole range of voluntary organisations working in the social care sector in Scotland.”

So said Elizabeth Carmichael, a Director of SACRO and one of the delegates at a recent training day held by SWIA to launch its self-evaluation guide on governance for social care voluntary organisations.

Over 20 organisations – large and small, national and local – attended the event in Edinburgh in November. They were represented there by chief executives and board members, all set to learn about the guide. It is a new tool that aims to help them self-assess and then plan to improve their arrangements for running the organisation, where needed.

Elizabeth Carmichael told *Inspection Matters*: “It was an opportunity to learn about and discuss with each other the new guide. Speakers from Turning Point Scotland shared their own experience. At their request, SWIA had reviewed their governance arrangements and that report had led to the development of the guide. So the framework has been very much rooted in reality.”

Elizabeth has previously been involved with governance work in the public sector. She is currently Deputy Chair of SACRO and chairs the community justice voluntary organisation’s governance sub-committee. “We have already been doing work on modernising our governance arrangements,” she said. “The guide gives us a framework for taking that forward. We are starting with the ‘board in control’ area for evaluation and will gradually work through the other areas.”

The guide identifies five high-level areas for evaluation, designed so that organisations can make some the subject of a review one year and others in

the next year. In addition to ‘board in control’, the other areas are openness, integrity, accountability and leadership.

Elizabeth added: “The guide comes at an opportune time for us at SACRO. Like Turning Point Scotland, we will be bringing in a new chief executive, with the departure of our long-serving, and much valued, chief officer. Also, given the other challenges that voluntary organisations are facing at present, the guide offers a very helpful tool for ensuring governance arrangements are robust and the importance of the role of board members clearly understood.”

The new guide adds to the tools already available to support the voluntary social care sector in the process of continuous improvement. SWIA Inspector Jo Harrison was pleased with the positive feedback from the training day. “Use of the guide is optional,” she said, “but it was clear that people are likely to use some or all of it at some point. We intend to run another event in 2009 and meantime are looking at a number of suggestions for some extra support from us. Ideas include an internet site to share knowledge, ‘action learning’ groups of people working on the same thing at the same time, and seminars on particular areas of the guide.”

SWIA has already circulated over 400 copies of the guide to organisations and more promotional work is planned for 2009, to embed the framework in organisations’ normal way of working.

- *Self-Evaluation Guide for assessing governance in voluntary organisations who provide social care in Scotland* is available at www.swia.gov.uk. The report *Governance Review of Turning Point Scotland* (November 2007) is also available in the publications section of the SWIA website.

Multi-Agency Resource Service will support professionals with network of expertise

The origins of Scotland's pioneering hub of child protection expertise, due to start up this summer, lie in SWIA's 2005 inspection into the care and protection of children in the Western Isles.

The recommendations in that inspection report were written with a view to identifying broad lessons that might help others working to protect children across Scotland and the rest of the UK. Recommendation 27 called for 'a multi-agency national resource for those working with complex child protection issues'.

As part of its response to that recommendation, the Scottish Government has now announced the setting-up of a Multi-Agency Resource Service (MARS), based at the University of Stirling, to help

councils and other child protection agencies work through difficult cases and share good practice. The small unit will bring together a network of expertise from practice, policy and research to support professionals in the field. The first of its kind in the UK, the hub will let agencies draw on advice and support from international leaders in the field.

For further information about the MARS unit, visit <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/01/23151803>

The SWIA report, *An Inspection into the Care and Protection of Children in Eilean Siar*, is available at www.swia.gov.uk.

German link-up

A recent approach from a German university presents another opportunity for SWIA to contribute to the quality of social services in a wider European arena.

In a link-up with the University of Kassel, one of their students – likely to be a mature student studying for a Masters degree in social work – will join SWIA on a four-month placement.

SWIA Inspector John Waterhouse told *Inspection Matters*: "We expect the student to join us for one of our inspections and help with the data collection and analysis. It's likely to be towards the end of this year."

Kassel (population: almost 200,000) is an ancient city in central Germany which has been largely re-built following the Second World War. Its best-known inhabitants include the Brothers Grimm, famed collectors of folk-tales and fairy-tales, but the university now wants to listen to a different sort of tale from SWIA.



"In another part of our link-up, organisers over there have asked for a speaker from SWIA to attend their seminar on the topic of service user perspectives in social work," said John. "They know that SWIA involves people who use services in inspections – for example, people with learning disabilities and looked after children. The seminar will be an excellent opportunity for us to show the benefits of this policy in a wider arena."

- Providing speakers for events such as the University of Kassel seminar is part of SWIA's activities designed to highlight inspection findings and other aspects of our work.



SWIA people

Social Work Inspector **Jo Harrison** is currently on maternity leave.

Inspection Support Manager **Samantha Paterson** is now working full-time with the restructure implementation team. Social Work Inspector **Ian Kerr** has been assigned there part-time for the next few months.

SWIA Inspections 2008-2009

Performance inspection	Inspection dates	Publication dates
Scottish Borders	April 2008 – October 2008	February 2009
North Lanarkshire	May 2008 – November 2008	February 2009
West Dunbartonshire	June 2008 – December 2008	March 2009
East Ayrshire	July 2008 – January 2009	April 2009
Stirling	August 2008 – February 2009	May 2009
Renfrewshire	September 2008 – March 2009	June 2009
South Ayrshire	October 2008 – April 2009	July 2009

NEWS ON INSPECTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Recent publications

Performance inspection of Midlothian Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary (November)

Performance Inspection of Falkirk Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary (December)

Review of the Management Arrangements of Colyn Evans by Fife Constabulary and Fife Council – Follow Up Report and Scottish Government Statement (January)

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