

A year of development and progress

SWIA completes first year as Scotland's Social Work Inspection Agency

April marks the first anniversary of SWIA, and this milestone also sees the Agency's new programme of inspections well underway.

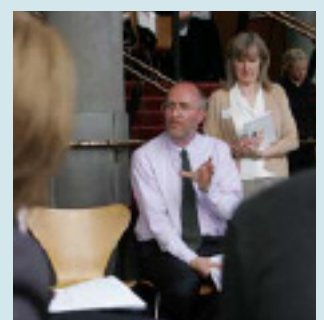
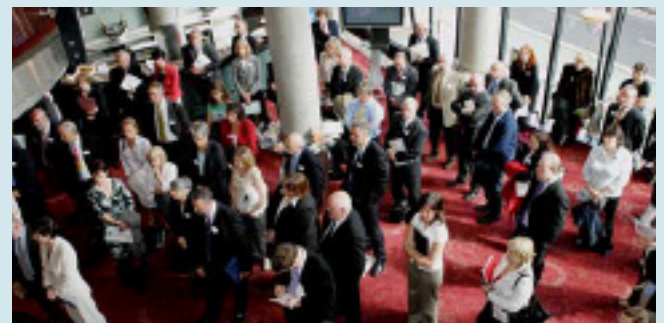
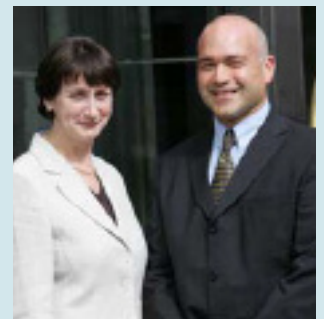
Since its launch in 2005, SWIA has established and trialled its inspection methodology and introduced a programme of performance inspections, which will deliver the inspection and evaluation of social work services in all 32 Scottish local authorities on a three-year cycle. Following the successful completion of three pilot inspections (in Angus, Fife and South Lanarkshire), the rolling programme around the country is now well underway.

SWIA is also carrying out multi-agency inspections and reviews on themes, conducted in partnership with other inspection and audit organisations, such as the Mental Welfare Commission, HMle and the Care Commission. Already started is the multi-agency inspection of services for people with learning disabilities and coming soon are the multi-agency inspections of services for older people and of substance misuse services.

At its launch, the new Agency committed itself to working in partnership with local authorities and others, and at the same time conducting inspections that would be "independent and rigorous, driving up standards and improving the quality of services across Scotland".

At the time of the launch, Peter Peacock, MSP, Minister for Education and Young People, said that the Agency had the opportunity "to inspire excellence in services". SWIA's inspectors have grasped the opportunity that their wide-ranging work gives them to do this. Their reports are highlighting many examples of good practice in authorities and agencies, and encouraging others to adopt these ways of working.

SWIA's team of Inspectors and admin staff has branched out from their office at Ladywell House in Edinburgh. They now have a base in Glasgow, too, which allows the team to forge closer links with local authorities in the west of the country. Councils around Glasgow have been invited to put forward names of admin staff who might be seconded to SWIA there.



Inside *Inspection Matters*

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- Spotlight on pilot performance inspections
- Handling of deaths of children in care

Minister launches *Changing Lives*

In February, Peter Peacock launched *Changing Lives*, the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review Group, along with the Scottish Executive's first stage response.

The Minister said: "The biggest overhaul of social work for 40 years will deliver better care and a more motivated, focused profession."

"*Changing Lives* makes clear that radical change is needed to provide social work services that meet the challenges of the 21st century. The current system needs national priorities to help set direction, stronger leadership and new confidence to act quickly and decisively."

Visit www.21socialwork.org.uk

Update on Criminal Justice inspections

Throughout this first year, SWIA has continued the programme of performance inspections of Criminal Justice services across Scotland, which was established by Social Work Services Inspectorate.

The year 2005-2006 has seen the publication of reports on the groupings of:

- Tayside
- Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire
- Lothian and Borders
- Lanarkshires

These reports are available online at www.swia.gov.uk.

Coming soon ... SWIA will shortly publish the report on the Forth Valley grouping and the second summary setting out overall findings – and in particular where good practice and improvements are evident. The programme will be completed by March 2007.

To increase efficiency for local authorities and SWIA, the inspection process has, where possible, been integrated with local authority performance inspections.

- SWIA is now actively considering the future shape of inspection of criminal justice services, and will be consulting on it. This is to take account of the role of Community Justice Authorities and developments in integrated working.



Influencing the Performance Inspection Programme

“The pilot performance inspections have influenced how we’re approaching the Scotland-wide programme.” So said SWIA Inspectors at the Inspection Agency’s one-day consultation event at Stirling in February.

Representatives from Scotland’s 32 local authorities came together for the day, and heard senior officials from the three authorities involved in the pilots – South Lanarkshire, Fife and Angus – speak about their experiences of the exercise, and what they had learned.

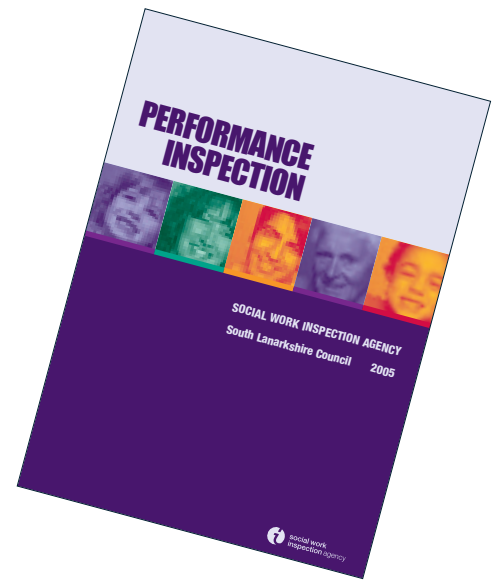
SWIA Inspectors then explained how the pilots were influencing the way they were going about the rest of the three-year rolling programme of inspections. Jennifer Turpie, one of the Inspectors involved in the process, told *Inspection Matters*: “The feedback from the pilot authorities has been very useful. It has either confirmed that we were doing the right thing, or encouraged us to refine our tools. For example, from the feedback we identified that the file reading template we were using did not capture the qualitative element of casework. So we have adapted the template for the next round of inspections.”

Important role of the local authority co-ordinator

The importance of the role of local authority co-ordinator in the smooth-running of the inspection process was confirmed at SWIA’s consultation event in February. However, there was also recognition that not all local authorities will be able to devote a member of staff to the co-ordination work full time.

In the pilot inspection area of South Lanarkshire, the Council’s Ciana Stewart acted as local co-ordinator, and she and a colleague worked fulltime on the project, both before and during the fieldwork phase.

“It was intensive, because it was new,” Ciana told *Inspection Matters*. “As well as our own staff, we were sharing information about the inspection process with our



stakeholders, particularly service users who would be directly involved in the inspection through visits or interviews. We met with their social workers and occupational therapists, and went through the inspection process with them. We organised all the on-site visits for the SWIA team.”

South Lanarkshire established a project approach from the start, including their Head of Strategic Services, Performance Manager and Public Information Officer for social work. Very quickly, too, they met with colleagues in Education who had been through an inspection process, to pick up tips from them. Their Performance Manager also joined the project team.

Communication was important. With SWIA and performance inspections being new, the project team needed to get information about them across to everyone.

“We developed a good working relationship with the SWIA project managers,” said Ciana. “They helped us work through the guidance and the good relationship carried through into the on-site visits, too.”

To help the efficiency, SWIA aims to provide as much detail as possible in advance of the inspection. For example, following the experience of the pilot inspections, a proforma of specific financial information is now provided instead of asking for more general financial information.

Ciana will be happy to share their experiences with anyone taking on the role of co-ordinator in other local authorities. She has already been in touch with the co-ordinator for Inverclyde, one of the councils which is currently undergoing an inspection.

Associate Inspector for SWIA

In the December *Inspection Matters*, we highlighted the role of associate inspectors, whose work is adding value to SWIA's performance inspection programme.

Last summer, when SWIA's Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay, invited councils, NHS boards and national voluntary organisations to put forward the names of senior managers to be considered as associate inspectors, she dangled a carrot in front of them. In return for their commitment to releasing senior managers to work on inspections, they would benefit from this unique opportunity for significant professional development and the chance to learn about the process ahead of their own authority's inspection.

With three pilot performance inspections now completed, is the experience living up to expectations for the associate inspectors? *Inspection Matters* asked **Tricia Campbell**, Joint Programme Manager (Older People) in the City of Edinburgh Council, who became an Associate Inspector in the Angus pilot inspection, to give us her views.

"I found the work to be a very positive experience. At the start, in the pre-fieldwork stage, I welcomed a one-to-one induction meeting with the Lead Inspector, and also a whole day meeting of the inspection team, where I was

able to get to know people and also to begin to get to grips with the performance framework. The Project Manager was my point of contact, providing me with the necessary advance practical information.

"The fieldwork itself went well, with good co-ordination from SWIA and the host authority. There were daily de-briefing meetings, which helped the team to bond together well. I was impressed with the variety of settings and service user groups arranged for our visits and interviews. The fieldwork was extremely interesting, but also very tiring.

"It was difficult, once the fieldwork was over, to find time in my working schedule for the follow-up work. There were other issues, too – such as a difficult-to-use analysis template – which I've been able to raise, and which SWIA has changed for future inspections.

"I did feel that I gained considerable benefits, including a real insight into different ways of working, both with SWIA and the local authority. Although I was an associate inspector, I felt accepted as a full member of the inspection team, and enjoyed contributing to the discussions on wider social work issues than my own specialist field."

Lay inspectors help to keep 'people' focus

An important concern in SWIA's local authority performance inspections is to establish the impact of social work services on the people who use them and on others involved, such as carers.

Face-to-face meetings and questionnaires play a big part in gauging that impact and helping the inspection team to learn about the experience of members of the public receiving services.

Helping to keep this focus, too, is the lay member of each inspection team. In the recent Performance Inspection of Social Work Services in Fife Council, the lay inspector was **Margaret MacLeod**, who got involved through her work as a lay assessor with the Care Commission.

Margaret tells *Inspection Matters* how she helped the team to 'keep the people focus':

"I was asked if I'd like to become involved with the SWIA inspection and, though at first I was a bit overwhelmed, it turned out to be a very enlightening experience.

"From the start, I was made to feel part of the team. There were briefing sessions, and I was able to do background reading, before the two weeks of fieldwork. The information I got was about Fife Council's policy and procedures. Being a lay inspector, I wasn't given any case files.

"During the fortnight's fieldwork in Fife, I sat in on interviews and was able to ask any questions then. I took the lead in one of the interviews. My forté was in dealing with care in the community, and talking to carers and people with disabilities and also with voluntary groups.

"I had to write a report of each of the visits we made to facilities such as day care centres, and how I found it. Later, I was involved in follow-up meetings with the rest of the inspection team, and my reports were used in different parts of the final inspection report.

"The experience has given me more sympathy with social workers – I hadn't realised just how wide a remit they have. I'm pleased to have been asked to be a lay inspector in another performance inspection, and look forward to becoming involved again."

Three days ... during performance inspections

SWIA Project Managers turn the pages of their reporter's notebooks to give an insight into the teamwork during the different stages of performance inspections.

Three weeks before fieldwork begins

I arrive in the office early to start ploughing through my "To Do" list. We are having a half day planning meeting with the full inspection team, so our associate, sessional, lay and carer inspectors will be joining us in the afternoon.

Meantime, I receive a call from my local authority co-ordinator who has some questions about the scheduling of the fieldwork timetable. She wants to confirm our meetings with senior management, discuss support for a focus group of adults with learning disabilities and resolve a problem with one of the files selected for observed practice. I need to work closely with her to ensure that everything comes together on time!

The team meeting starts at 1 pm and we focus our discussion on all the evidence gathered. We evaluate the advance information and analysis of the file reading exercise. We also discuss the key themes emerging from the self evaluation questionnaire and the analysis of the questionnaires sent to staff, people who use services, carers and partners. The team identify a number of areas of good practice and agree on some areas for improvement, both of which we may wish to explore further during fieldwork. We will feed this back to the local authority at a meeting next week.

We fire through the rest of the agenda and wrap things up by 4.30 pm, which gives me time to get back to the office and touch base with my admin support that has been busy pulling together an information pack for each member of the team to carry with them on fieldwork.

I begin drafting a summary of the discussions from the afternoon, in preparation for the interim feedback meeting but decide to head home at 6 pm. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of my co-ordinator and her support team, everything seems to be coming together on time.

During the two weeks of fieldwork

At 6 am I am rudely woken by the alarm clock. I have my first meeting at 7.30 am over breakfast with the inspection team to sort through last minute logistics for the day. My blackberry is already picking up emails and I have two voice mails on my mobile phone since last night!

This morning I am off to a site visit with one of the inspectors. I really enjoy this part as it puts the work I do into context.

The visit lasts half a day. Then it is off to a meeting with service users. No time for lunch. On my way I get a call from one of the inspectors who is lost. I communicate directions and call the organiser to warn them that they are running late.

I arrive back at base at 4.00 pm and summarise the key points from today's visits with my colleague before my 4.30 pm meeting with our local authority co-ordinator. We go through the changes to the timetable (there have been four already today).

I then head back to the hotel and prepare an agenda for our debriefing meeting which lasts from 6 pm to 7.30 pm. During the meeting I type up notes straight onto a laptop to save time. I am feeling very tired by this stage.

Dinner is from 8 pm to 10 pm. We have a rule that we are not allowed to talk about work but inevitably we break it every time. Then it is up to my room to type up the rest of my notes and prepare my papers for tomorrow. Lights out at 11.30 pm.

Post fieldwork

We are nearing the end of the post fieldwork phase and well into the publication stage.

The final stages of the publication process are very busy. I'm in the office early and I call the publishers to set up a meeting to go through the contract and proof of the report.

I liaise with the lead inspector about the summary leaflet. This is a four page leaflet that summarises the key findings from the report and identifies examples of good practice. I send the report along with a minute to the Minister for Education informing him of the forthcoming publication. I also send the report and press release to the press office and send the final report to the local authority confirming publication date.

After lunch, I spend some time with one of my colleagues who takes me through the Scottish Executive web publication procedures. Our inspection reports are available on both the SWIA website and also the SE website. There is a lot of paper work to fill in.

At 3 pm I meet with the publishers. The timeline is very tight for publication but we are on track. I receive the first proof and spend the rest of the afternoon working through it.

Before I leave I call the local authority to finalise the details of the meeting with elected members. This is a meeting where SWIA presents the findings of the report to the Council. The depute chief inspector, lead inspector and myself will be attending.

Sharing good practice

One of the features of SWIA's new performance inspection reports is the focus on good practice in councils, with a view to sharing it with other authorities. The reports already published for the pilot inspections in Angus and Fife highlight a number of examples of good practice in these areas, often achieved in partnership with others. Their good practice includes:

in Angus:

- Young carers' groups – the groups plan their own activities that include awareness raising (such as newsletters and a recently produced DVD) as well as fun activities. The groups have a support worker to talk to both as a group and individually. Young people told inspectors that the groups were important in helping them “lose the stress”.

Handling of deaths in care

Regulations and guidance

Local authorities are required to notify Scottish Ministers in the event of the death of a child who is looked after by them.

Following initial notification, within one working day of the child's death, the local authority has 28 days to submit a report and appropriate supporting documents. The contents of the report are set out in guidance and include:

- full medical and social histories;
- an account of the circumstances of the death; and
- any relevant educational reports.

The report and supporting documents are read to examine the arrangements for the welfare of the child, assess whether acts of commission or omission by the local authority or other agencies have contributed to the child's death and identify any lessons to be learned at local or national level.

Statistics

The number of deaths reported varies from year to year, usually ranging between 10 and 15, with 12 in 2005. The most common causes of death for boys and girls, in the longer term, were “expected” (27%) and “other health” (25%). Other deaths were accounted for by various types of accident, misadventure or suicide, usually with boys over-represented.

- An integrated approach to the reduction of emergency admissions to hospital of older people.

in Fife:

- Continuous professional development – Fife has recognised the need for social workers to develop their skills and encourage learning. It has developed a database which will support staff to build their own learning folders.
- Fife EmployAbility Team – In July 2005, the Fife EmployAbility Team was awarded the internationally recognised ISO 9001 2000 award for the services it delivers to people with disabilities and health problems. This shows the Team's commitment to focusing on customer needs and meeting these with a quality service.

Office procedures

SWIA has the lead in handling cases, with assistance from a Senior Medical Officer, SEHD, and HMle. There is an agreed protocol for handling cases. Case management and statistical analysis are assisted by a database which covers both active and archive cases.

Handling issues

- A number of agencies may be involved simultaneously in handling the same case (for example, the Police, Procurator Fiscal and the Mental Welfare Commission). So good inter-agency liaison is necessary in determining order of precedence and sharing information.
- Responsible authorities and agencies need guidance and support to provide a full report and supporting documents. Otherwise much time is wasted in calling for further information.
- Having an established and experienced multi-disciplinary team within the Scottish Executive assists both in turning round cases and in agreeing a line.
- Most cases are signed-off with no further action.
- In a few cases lessons to be learned at local or national levels are identified.
- Cases which exemplify good practice are signed-off with an appropriate commendation.

SWIA contact point

To report deaths or obtain information and advice, contact Anne Lawlor, system administrator, tel: 0131 244 5423, email anne.lawlor@swia.gsi.gov.uk, or write to SWIA, Ladywell House, Ladywell Road, Edinburgh EH12 7TB.

NEWS ON INSPECTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Due for completion soon

- Integrated inspection of learning disability services
- Audit of substance misuse services (July 2006)
- Integrated inspections of services for older people (December 2006)

Recently published

- Performance inspection of social work services – Fife Council Report and summary leaflet (March 2006)
- Performance inspection of social work services – Angus Council Report and summary leaflet (February 2006)
- Review of the Management Arrangements of Colyn Evans by Fife Constabulary and Fife Council (December 2005)

Coming soon ... SWIA event

- Protecting our Communities – from inspection to better practice – Edinburgh Conference Centre, Heriot-Watt University – 2 May, 2006

Stop Press:

All SWIA email addresses have changed. To comply with Government Secure Intranet security requirements, all SWIA email addresses now have the following format:

first name.second name@swia.gsi.gov.uk.

Address:

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Email: info@swia.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.swia.gov.uk

Register for regular email updates on www.swia.gov.uk

Next issue of *Social Work Inspection Matters* newsletter: July/August 2006.

If you would like the newsletter in an alternative format, please contact us with your request.

