

Sharing knowledge and promoting good practice

Social work performance inspections have now been completed in 14 of Scotland's 32 local authorities, along with a number of other inspections and reviews. This means that SWIA has a unique and ever-growing store of knowledge, based on all the findings. The aim is to make maximum use of this knowledge to inform policy development and to improve social work services.

Effective communications are crucial, to share the knowledge with social work practitioners, academics and members of the general public. SWIA's communication strategy, published on our website, details how we plan to inform social workers, so they can adopt good practice; how we plan to share expert knowledge with academic researchers; and how we plan to show members of the public that improved services can change their lives.

SWIA's Corporate Manager, Andrew Wilkinson, told *Inspection Matters*: "As we're now well into the first three-year cycle of performance inspections, the quantity – and quality – of knowledge gained from inspections and reviews is considerable. We must be able to share it with everyone with an interest, in local authorities and voluntary organisations, in universities and colleges, and in the community, where people may be using social work services or have a caring role.

"We need to tell people what our inspection work means to them as individuals and also to their local community, and how it is helping to drive up standards in social work, resulting in real benefits for them.

"To help us achieve all this, we will enhance our professional communications through marketing advisers, who are helping us develop our communications programme. The emphasis will be on getting information out to people and also providing knowledge of social work practice."

SWIA's website will play an important part in the communications programme. Based on the theme 'See People's Lives Improving', a new-look site will provide easy-to-access knowledge from inspections, highlighting the benefits of social work services to people in the community. With improved navigation, it will be an important resource for practitioners and academics, featuring dedicated pages for their use.

- What do YOU want to see in SWIA's new-look website, due later this year? Log onto www.swia.gov.uk and tell us what you think.

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Multi-agency inspection finds high quality services for people with learning disabilities

A recently-published report features the high quality of services being provided for people with learning disabilities in Ayrshire.

The multi-agency inspection of services for people with learning disabilities in the local authority areas of North, South and East Ayrshire has found that all three councils, in partnership with NHS Ayrshire & Arran, were helping people with learning disabilities to be independent and enjoy a good quality of life. NHS services were meeting health needs, and there were encouraging signs in the management of transition from children's to adult services. People with learning disabilities had good access to education opportunities.

The inspection was led by SWIA in partnership with NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, the Care Commission, HMle, People First Scotland, Carers Scotland and other partners. The inspection team included four people with learning disabilities and two family carers. It was the first time that any inspection agency had reported on a check (made by NHS staff) on the health records of adults with learning disabilities.

Chief Social Work Inspector Alexis Jay said that it was especially significant, being the first multi-agency inspection of services for people with learning disabilities in Scotland. "The inspection highlighted that good work is being done within the partnerships to increase access to services, improve independence and provide opportunities for lifelong learning," she said.

The report also made recommendations in areas where improvement is required, and the partnerships are now preparing action plans for carrying out the changes needed in their areas.

The experience gained by SWIA and partners in this pilot will help to take forward multi-agency inspections of services for learning disabilities in other parts of Scotland.

Learning from each other

Fiona Wallace and Steve Robertson were two of the inspectors with learning disabilities on the multi-agency team. They said: "It was good that people with learning disabilities were inspectors.

"People with learning disabilities often have a different view from professionals. As we have had different experiences

we notice different things. We think that having inspectors with learning disabilities on the team meant that we all learnt a lot from each other. We learnt a lot from working with all the different workers in the team, and we hope the other inspectors learnt a lot from working with us."

- The report and summary *Multi-Agency Inspection of Services for People with Learning Disabilities in Ayrshire* are available online at www.swia.gov.uk. The accessible summary, written and illustrated in an easy-to-understand style, was produced with help from FAIR, the information and advice service for people with learning disabilities and their families.

Performance inspections – into year three

As the rolling programme of social work performance inspections for all 32 Scottish local authorities moves into its third year, Depute Chief Inspector David Cumming told *Inspection Matters* that the programme was 'progressing well'.

"The three pilot inspections in 2005 were followed by ten inspections in 2006, with a further eight scheduled for this year," he said. "We will inspect the remaining eleven authorities in 2008 into 2009, with the last report probably being published in July 2009. Once all councils have been inspected, a good foundation for future improvement will have been established. The first round of inspections has been necessarily rigorous and comprehensive and a second round would be prudent to consolidate improvement. Whether these should be full or more targeted inspections will be informed by, among other considerations, the overall quality of the first round."

The aim of all the inspections is to promote excellent social work services, which members of the public can rely on, and which will improve the quality of their lives. To meet the recommendations in the inspection report, each local authority is asked to prepare an action plan within three months of the report's publication, to be discussed and agreed by SWIA. Over the following year, the authority will put the plan into effect, with SWIA monitoring progress.

The follow-up work will also take account of the action plans coming from criminal justice inspections and aspects of multi-agency inspections, which to date have focused on learning disabilities, older people and substance misuse.

Link inspectors

SWIA is identifying a link inspector to work with each local authority in Scotland. In addition to keeping up to date with improvements and developments, the link inspector is a single point of contact for the local authority.

In most cases, the link inspector will be the one who has led or who will lead the performance inspection there.

The key aspects of the role are:

- to monitor action plans;
- to hold up-to-date knowledge of the services in the area, the performance of the council and any current significant review reports;
- to advise the Chief Social Work Inspector on any future inspections;
- to be a single accessible contact;
- if necessary, to work with the authority to develop any specification for improvement;
- if necessary, to signpost options for improvement; and
- to share areas of good practice and other inspection-led knowledge.

Starting later in 2007...

Performance Inspections in:

- East Lothian
- Edinburgh
- Aberdeen

Multi-agency inspections on:

- services for older people in Forth Valley
- youth justice services
- throughcare services (the first thematic criminal justice inspection, with another – on the management in the community of high risk offenders – scheduled for 2008)
- an audit of governance arrangements of a national voluntary organisation.

Criminal justice inspection programme

With the publication of SWIA's inspections of criminal justice social work services in the Ayrshires partnership and Shetland this summer, the three-year programme of inspections of criminal justice services has come to an end.

Alongside the final reports, the agency will publish a summary report setting out the overall conclusions and looking ahead to the implications for criminal justice social work in the context of Community Justice Authorities.

Now that the programme is complete, SWIA will include criminal justice social work within the scope

of performance inspections of local authority social work services. The exceptions to this will be where criminal justice services have been inspected in the past three years. Chief Social Work Inspector Alexis Jay has written individually to all local authorities, setting out exactly what this means for them.

SWIA is also developing joint thematic inspections and contributing to the development of a performance framework for criminal justice services. More about this in the next issue of *Inspection Matters*.

SWIA people

Dave Rowbotham has joined SWIA as an Inspector. Previously, Dave worked for West Lothian Council, and acted as local authority co-ordinator during the recent performance inspection. Another new Inspector, **Judith Tait**, comes to SWIA from Scottish Borders social work department, where she was a service manager in children and families. Both Dave and Judith are based at Ladywell House.



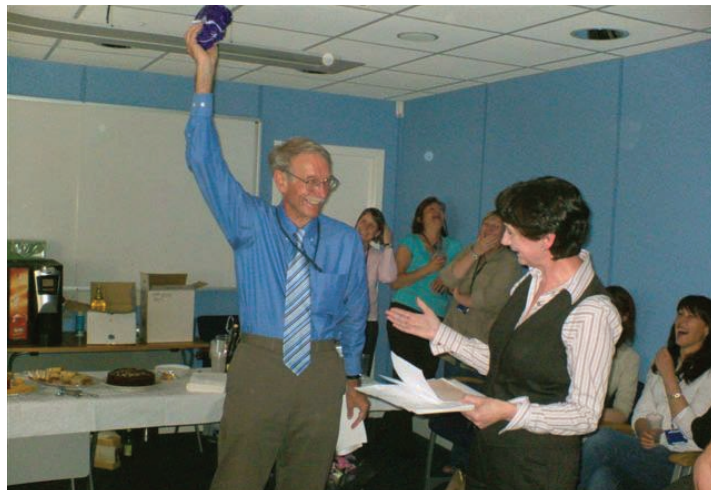
Audrey Flannagan has been on secondment with SWIA as an Inspection Project Manager, and has now returned to East Renfrewshire Council. It has been a win-win situation, with Audrey taking her knowledge of SWIA's work back to East Renfrewshire and her fellow Project Managers having benefited from her local authority experience.

SWIA colleagues gathered at the end of April to wish 'happy retirement' to **Stuart Bond**, Social Work Inspector, a well-known figure in social work circles over a number of years. Stuart was into his 24th 'season' in advisory and inspection work with children and families in Scotland, having joined the Social Work Services Group in 1984, then moving with the changing service into SWSI and SWIA.

"I'll miss the sense of community that we have in SWIA, and the strong sense of belonging," said Stuart. "It's been good to be part of the development from an advisory body into an inspection agency, where our work is much more sharply focused."

Stuart and his wife Mary are now 'preparing for another adventure'. "We're planning to live by the sea in Bournemouth," he said, "and I might get involved again in some social work practice."

Alistair Gaw is leaving SWIA to take up a new post on July 9 as Senior Manager for Children and Families and Criminal Justice in Fife Council. Alistair was with the Scottish Executive for four years before being appointed Depute Chief Inspector for the start-up of SWIA. He told *Inspection Matters*: "It's been a privilege to be with SWIA and to work with social work colleagues to improve social work across Scotland. It's always hard to leave a job you're enjoying, but I'm looking forward to an operational management role in Fife."



Continuously improving performance

SWIA is committed to evaluating its own performance as rigorously and objectively as it assesses elsewhere. A decision was made early on to base this evaluation on the model developed by the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM), the most widely used management framework in Europe. EFQM started up almost twenty years ago in the private sector. Now it is the hub of globally-minded organisations of all sizes in both private and public sectors, all sharing a belief in the principles of sustainable excellence.

SWIA Inspector Jennifer Turpie has been part of the team taking the EFQM model as a framework for the agency's evaluation of its performance. She told *Inspection Matters* that in 2007 SWIA was "stepping up a gear" in the drive to continuously improve its own performance. "With advice and guidance from Quality Scotland, EFQM's national partner organisation in this country, we now have a robust framework to drive performance improvement," she said.

"We devoted a day and a half in January to a session where everyone in SWIA came together to look at the

issues facing us as an agency. It was a day of very lively discussion and debate on many different topics, from knowledge management to workforce planning, and from staff learning to recycling initiatives.

"We were able to focus on eight areas as the basis for our performance model: leadership, policy and strategy, people management, partnership and resources, processes, customer results and society, key performance indicators and communication. From there we've gone on to form improvement teams, each working on action in two areas of performance. We want to be able to show real change, rather than being too ambitious."

Jennifer added: "Every member of staff is involved in the improvement programme, and we welcome views from others with an interest in our work, too. With our own model based on the EFQM framework, we are wholly committed to identifying – and acting upon – areas for improvement in our performance."

Fit and healthy

Runners and walkers from SWIA will again be among the teams taking part in JogScotland's annual 5-kilometre challenge around Inverleith Park and the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh on June 26. The event is part of the JogScotland programme to promote jogging groups in the workplace and in local communities, encouraging everyone to get out, be active and stay healthy.

Keep-fit enthusiast **Ken Logan**, one of SWIA's administrators, is hoping the 5k fun challenge will inspire more colleagues to join in regular lunch-hour walking sessions. "One-off events help to get people interested," he said, "but it's the regular exercise that's most important in keeping everyone fit and healthy."

Photos from the JogScotland event in the next issue of Inspection Matters!

MoonWalk

Also signing up to fitness – and doing it for a great cause – is SWIA Administrator **Dawn Black**. Dawn will be in a team of eight among the 10,000 power walkers taking part in this year's Edinburgh MoonWalk, starting at midnight on June 16 at the Meadows. Not only will everyone be walking a marathon or half marathon, but they will all (men too) be wearing 'trademark' decorated bras to raise awareness for breast cancer.

Power walking is a fast-growing sport which everyone can enjoy. By using a simple technique, you can raise your heart rate, get the blood pumping, get fitter, and increase your walking speed to four or four-and-a-half miles an hour.

The Edinburgh MoonWalk benefits the Breast Cancer Institute in Edinburgh and Maggie's Centres all over Scotland.

NEWS ON INSPECTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Recently published

- Performance Inspection of Social Work Services West Lothian – Report and Summary (March 2007)
- Multi-Agency Inspection of Services for People with Learning Disabilities in Ayrshire – Report and Summary (March 2007)
- Performance Inspection of Social Work Services Orkney Islands – Report and Summary (March 2007)
- Report on the Orkney Islands Criminal Justice Social Work Services (March 2007)

SWIA Inspections 2007-2008

Inspection	Inspection dates	Publication date
Highland	July 2006 – December 2006	May 30, 2007
Glasgow	December 2006 – March 2007	June 2007
Shetland	October 2006 – July 2007	August 2007
North Ayrshire	January 2007 – August 2007	August 2007
Argyll and Bute	January – September 2007	November 2007
Forth Valley (Multi-Agency Inspection Older People)	February – August 2007	November 2007
Dundee	February – October 2007	November 2007
Moray	March – November 2007	November 2007
East Lothian	May 2007 – February 2008	February 2008
Edinburgh	June 2007 – February 2008	March 2008
Aberdeen	August 2007 – April 2008	April 2008
Youth Justice Services	March 2007 – March 2008	April 2008

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