

State of the nation's social work services

With performance inspections completed in more than half of Scotland's 32 local authorities, SWIA is now singularly placed to provide informed comment on the state of the country's social work services. That is one of the themes of the agency's recently published *Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2006-07*.

In her introduction to the report, Chief Social Work Inspector, Alexis Jay, praises the commitment of local authorities to improving people's lives. She writes: "I have been impressed by the genuine commitment to drive improvement in services on the part of councils to deliver better outcomes for the people they serve." The first year of performance inspections has enabled SWIA to gather a unique – and substantial – body of evidence about services.

The annual report highlights progress made in working with others to continually improve social work services so that they meet people's needs and give the public confidence in them. In the local authorities already inspected, SWIA inspectors are working with the councils to make sure they put their resulting action plans into effect, and follow-up inspections are beginning. Performance inspections have been scheduled for the remaining authorities, with a view to delivering a full review of all 32 Scottish local authorities by mid-2009.

In addition to the performance inspections, during 2006-07 SWIA's reported achievements have included:

- completing the current programme of inspections of criminal justice social work;
- developing methodologies and carrying out pilot multi-agency inspections of learning disability services (Ayrshire), substance misuse services (Grampian) and older people's services (Tayside); and
- continuing to contribute to the development of policy on criminal justice, community care and services to children and families.

Alexis Jay makes an upbeat assessment of inspection findings, writing: "Already, our evaluations have shown that whilst there is clear scope for significant improvement in the quality of social work services, there is much good practice to be nurtured and celebrated."

- Copies of SWIA's *Annual Report and Accounts 2006-07* are available at www.swia.gov.uk.



Alexis Jay
Chief Social Work Inspector &
Chief Executive

“We are actively looking at innovative ways to disseminate ... information and to promote good practice. Central to this strategy is the restructuring of our website into an interactive resource for social work practitioners, academics and other stakeholders.”

Alexis Jay, SWIA Annual Report.

Look out for our new-look website, coming soon at www.swia.gov.uk.

Inside *Inspection Matters*

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- Managing high-risk offenders: thematic inspections planned
- Latest on publications, inspections, conferences

Multi-agency inspection of substance misuse services is piloted in Grampian

The report of the first multi-agency inspection of substance misuse services in Scotland was published on 24 August 2007, focusing on the Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray areas. The three local Drug and Alcohol Action Teams had agreed to host the pilot inspection, which was led by SWIA in partnership with NHS Quality Improvement Scotland and the Care Commission. This is SWIA's third pilot multi-agency inspection, and comes after the reviews of services for people with learning disabilities in Ayrshire and for older people in Tayside.

The inspection team was looking at how the local authorities and health services worked together to provide joined-up and integrated services for people who misused drugs and alcohol, and whether these services helped people to improve their lives. The team included doctors, nurses, an inspector of constabulary, a carer inspector and people who had used services.

While drugs tended to be the major focus for services, many people who used the services said that alcohol was the main problem. People were generally satisfied with the way social work and community health services worked together to help them, but inspectors highlighted a number of areas where improvement was needed. These included:

- the need to reduce waiting times and waiting lists, particularly in Aberdeen City;
- improving the accessibility of services, particularly in some rural areas;
- greater involvement of people who use services and carers in developing services;
- better screening and assessment of families where parents misuse substances and there are children in the household; and
- working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Action Teams need to develop and agree local outcome and performance measures, to make sure resources are properly targeted.

SWIA's Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay, commented: "Action is already being taken to address the recommendations outlined in the report and SWIA will continue to work with each Action Team to ensure the necessary changes are made and monitored." She added: "We fully appreciate the time and co-operation of the three local authorities, NHS Grampian, Grampian Police and the many staff, carers and users of substance misuse services who contributed to this first pilot inspection of substance misuse services, which will inform our future work in this area."

Rigorous process

The pilot multi-agency inspection was "an extremely rigorous process, which for the first time in the area of substance misuse has looked objectively at the nature of services delivered by health, local authorities and voluntary sector partners across a

large diverse area in Scotland", so said Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Brian Kidd, one of the inspection team members.

Dr Kidd told *Inspection Matters*: "The SWIA Performance Improvement Model (PIM) approach to inspection and accountability is one which NHS-based substance misuse services have been only peripherally exposed to around child protection and criminal justice work.

"The approach is very incisive and detailed. As a Lead Clinician and DAAT Chair, involvement in the process has opened my eyes to the need for services to be able to demonstrate the quality of their delivery and for local areas to have an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses with associated plans for service improvement. If this pilot approach is rolled out it will be extremely helpful for services, commissioners and communities."

Good practice

One of the joint working schemes highlighted in the report was a youth project in Aberdeenshire which offered education on alcohol, drugs and safer sex, with the emphasis on social inclusion activities and the development of personal confidence and social skills. The project had good links with the local GP practice, the pharmacy and the police, and the preventative work was a good example of a project responding to the realities of young people's lives.

- The report and summary *Substance Misuse Services in Grampian 2007* are available online at www.swia.gov.uk.

JogScotland

SWIA runners and walkers made a strong showing in the 2007 Co-op JogScotland 5K Challenge in Edinburgh's Inverleith Park and Royal Botanic Garden at the end of June. Two teams from SWIA took part in the popular annual event, which helps to promote jogging groups in the workplace and local communities.

With 1,800 entrants, the Edinburgh challenge was divided into two races. Both SWIA teams took part in Race B, finishing in 13th and 20th places. Jogging enthusiast and SWIA Administrator, Ken Logan, helped to steward the event. "Everyone enjoyed the day – a great way to keep fit and have a good time socially, too," he said.

SWIA team members were Andrea Middlemass, Dawn Black, Janet Hunter, Marc Hendrikson, Margaret McDavid, Martha Shortreed, Nicola Greig, Rosie Lawrence, Tom Leckie, Willie Paxton and Judith Tait.

MoonWalk

Just 10 days before competing in the JogScotland event, Dawn Black was completing a marathon in Edinburgh's MoonWalk. The SWIA Administrator was one of 10,000 walkers pounding the city streets in pouring rain, raising funds for cancer charities.

Dawn was part of 'Team Betty', whose members raised between £2,500 and £3,000. The grand total achieved by all the MoonWalkers that night was over £1.6m. The funds are helping to support the Breast Cancer Institute in Edinburgh and Maggie's Centres all over Scotland.

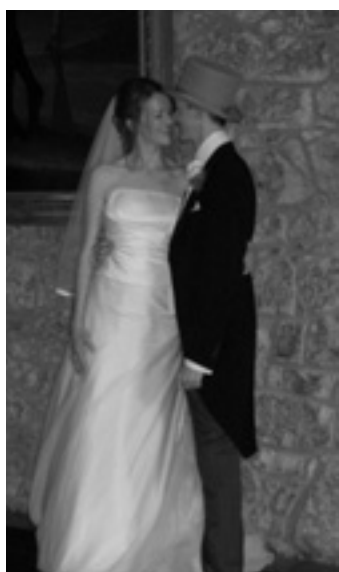
Dawn is already planning for the 2008 MoonWalk. "It'll be a half-marathon next time, with my 14-year-old son wanting to join in, too," she said.



Ready to start the Edinburgh MoonWalk

Photo courtesy of www.walkthewalk.org

August wedding for Jennifer



Congratulations to SWIA Inspector **Jennifer Crowson** (née Turpie) who was married on 25 August in the beautiful surroundings of Lennoxlove House, Haddington. For Jennifer's family and friends who travelled from Canada for the wedding, the historic setting at Lennoxlove made it even more special.

Jennifer and her husband Jonathan are pictured here on their happy day.

It's a lucky date! Two other SWIA staff members had 25 August weddings – not this year, but in 2006 for Administrator, Stephanie Smith, and in 1980 for Inspection Support Manager, Susan Fallon.

SWIA people

Inspection Support Manager **Andrea Middlemass** has been promoted within the Scottish Government, leaving SWIA to take up a new post in the Census branch in the General Register Office for Scotland.

CJ social work performance inspections

Alexis Jay, Chief Social Work Inspector, spoke at the Association of Directors of Social Work Criminal Justice Conference and Exhibition on 20 October. The event coincided with the publication of SWIA's summary report on the Criminal Justice Social Work Performance Inspection programme. This programme began in September 2004 and the final report – on Criminal Justice services in Shetland – was published in August this year.

In her presentation to the conference, Alexis Jay covered a range of performance areas, including the quality of social work reports to the courts, supervision of offenders in the community and community service. This information will be relevant in the drive for more effective ways of reducing crime, and making community penalties and disposals more effective.

Although the programme of Criminal Justice inspections has now been completed, SWIA will continue to inspect the performance of Criminal Justice social work services as part of its performance inspection programme, due to be completed in 2009.

NEWS ON INSPECTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Recently published

- Multi-agency Inspection of Substance Misuse Services in Grampian – Report and Summary (August 2007)
- Performance Inspection of Social Work Services Shetland Islands – Report and Summary (August 2007)
- Report on the Shetland Islands Criminal Justice Social Work Services (August 2007)
- Performance Inspection of Social Work Services Glasgow City Council – Report and Summary (August 2007)
- Report on the Ayrshire Partnership Criminal Justice Social Work Services (June 2007)
- Performance Inspection of Social Work Services Highland – Report and Summary (May 2007)
- Multi-agency inspection Collaborative working across services for older people in Tayside – Report and Summary (May 2007)

SWIA Inspections 2007-2008

Inspection	Inspection dates	Publication date
North Ayrshire	February – May 2007	December 2007
Argyll and Bute	February – June 2007	October 2007
Forth Valley (Multi-Agency Inspection Older People)	March – June 2007	January 2008 T.B.C.
Dundee	March – June 2007	November 2007
Moray	April – July 2007	December 2007
East Lothian	May 2007 – February 2008	February 2008
Edinburgh	July – October 2007	March 2008
Aberdeen	September – December 2007	May 2008
Turning Point	May – August 2007	November 2007

SWIA CONFERENCES COMING SOON ...

- **Stakeholders conference** in December/January – a chance to look at what we have learned from performance inspections so far.
- **Improving care for older people: messages from regulation and inspection** on 29 January 2008 – a joint conference with Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Commission.
- **Changing Lives** – a joint conference with CCPS (Community Care Providers Scotland) for the voluntary sector on governance – in February 2008.

Full details coming soon at www.swia.gov.uk.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Address:

Social Work Inspection Agency
Room 2/1/1
Ladywell House
Ladywell Road
Edinburgh EH12 7TB

Telephone: 0131 244 4735

Fax: 0131 244 5496

Email: info@swia.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.swia.gov.uk

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

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