

SOCIAL WORK INSPECTION AGENCY LAUNCHES REPORT ON QUALITY OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

'Improving Social Work in Scotland' provides overview of four year inspection programme

A key report into the quality of social work services in Scotland, launched today (12 March 2010) by the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), shows that services are generally of good quality and reliable, but are not yet performing consistently enough across the country.

The 'Improving Social Work in Scotland' report, which provides an overview of the findings from SWIA's four year inspection programme of social work services, will be launched by Chief Social Work Inspector Alexis Jay at a conference today in Glasgow.

The report, which covers services for adults, children and families, criminal justice and carers, shows the level of satisfaction with social work services in Scotland are high and there are many examples of good service delivery across the country. However, it also shows wide variations in both spend and the way services are provided for both adults and children.

In addition, the report makes clear the challenges faced by those developing and sustaining social work services, highlighting that on the whole staff are well motivated and show a commitment to providing services that improve the lives of people who used them.

Other key findings from the 'Improving Social Work in Scotland' report include:

- More needed to be done by social work services and their partners to improve the care of older people. In 2009, older people were twice as

likely to be living in care homes than living in their own homes with intensive support.

- Social work services were looking after and providing care for increasing numbers of children. Policy initiatives to improve kinship care, foster care and residential care have had varied impact.
- Social work services were doing some effective work with offenders but overall the quality was variable.
- Carers placed a high value on the services and supports available to them, but carers own needs were not routinely assessed and the range of support available was inconsistent across Scotland.
- Leadership was of critical importance to the overall quality of social work services.
- There was no close association between levels of council expenditure and performance. The best performing councils were not the highest spenders.

Alexis Jay, Chief Social Work Inspector, said:

“This report provides an overview of our findings about social work services across Scotland’s 32 councils. It provides a comprehensive picture of how they are performing and how the needs of those who rely on them are being met.

“Inspectors met many key people involved in social work services, including those who used services, and their carers. We would like to thank everyone who took time to contribute to the inspection process for their valuable input.

“Whilst our findings provide a mixed picture of how social work services are performing, it is important to stress that the vast majority of recommendations

we made throughout our four year programme have been addressed, and the overall quality of services has improved.

“Social work services are now faced with rising demands against a background of severe constraints on resources. This makes it all the more important that resources are used in the most effective and efficient ways possible. SWIA is committed to sharing the many examples of good practice we have found in our inspections.”

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Notes to News Editors

You are invited to send a photographer/reporter/camera crew to the launch of the ‘Improving Social Work in Scotland’ report, which will take place at the Radisson Hotel, 301 Argyle Street, Glasgow on 12 March 2010.

Chief Social Work Inspector Alexis Jay will be providing an overview of the findings from the report to conference delegates from 10.30 to 11.30, and will then be available for interview from 11.30 onwards.

The report contains the findings of the agency’s four year inspection programme of councils’ social work services across Scotland (2005 – 09)