



# **SOCIAL WORK INSPECTION AGENCY**

## **EXECUTIVE AGENCY**

### **CORPORATE PLAN 2005 to 2008**

**NOVEMBER 2005**

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## **Preface**

This is the first Corporate Plan for SWIA - the Social Work Inspection Agency. It covers the period 2005 to 2008 and has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and our own staff. It forms the basis for judging the success of our performance.

The past 12 months have been a period of significant change as the former Social Work Services Inspectorate has become SWIA. We are now positioned to take the lead on the increasingly vital contribution social work services make to the social wellbeing of Scotland. SWIA has a determined focus on the positive impact of social work services on the lives of people who use services.

Key objectives over the life of this plan include:

- the development and delivery of new performance inspection programmes of social work services provided by a local authority or organisations commissioned by the local authority;
- an integrated inspection of services for people with learning disabilities;
- an audit of substance misuse services;
- an integrated inspection of older people's services;
- improving social work in Scotland by disseminating inspection-led knowledge and providing professional advice for policy development; and,
- continuing to improve our own effectiveness and efficiency as an organisation.

Our contribution to improving Scottish social work depends on working closely with our many partners across all the sectors we work in. Continuing to strengthen those partnerships will be central to our ability to achieve the targets in this Corporate Plan.

Alexis Jay  
Chief Social Work Inspector  
Social Work Inspection Agency

## **About SWIA**

This is the first Corporate Plan for the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA). SWIA is an Executive Agency set up by Scottish Ministers in April 2005 under the terms of the Scotland Act 1998.

The Plan covers three financial years over the period 2005-2006 to 2007-2008 and will be updated each year. Annual Business Plans, setting out the key targets against which the performance of the Agency will be measured, will be published from 2005.

This Corporate Plan complements the SWIA Framework Document which sets out the relationship between the Agency, the Scottish Executive and Scottish Ministers.

The Plan:

- sets out our mission, vision, objectives, strategic priorities, values and key milestones for the period; and
- identifies external factors that affect the context and successful delivery of our plan and how we will take account of them.

## **Status of SWIA**

SWIA is an Executive Agency under the terms of the Scotland Act 1998. We operate independently and impartially whilst remaining directly accountable to Scottish Ministers for the standards of our work. Agency status safeguards the independence of our inspection, review and reporting activities within the overall context of Scottish Ministers' strategic objectives to modernise and improve social work services across Scotland.

## **Scope**

SWIA operates within statutory powers of inspection in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (as amended). The scope of our inspections will extend to all duties and functions of local authorities and other bodies under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and related legislation. Where services provided by a local authority (or agent commissioned by them) in fulfilment of any of these duties or functions are inspected by another regulator, such as the Care Commission, we will take into account the findings of the inspection of that regulator and not duplicate it. The Chief Social Work Inspector is authorised by Scottish Ministers to exercise these powers and authorises Inspectors as they are appointed. We are not a complaints body and will not investigate individual complaints from members of the public.

## **Development of SWIA**

In developing SWIA we will work to achieve a balance between our independence in evaluation and in day-to-day operations and our role in supporting Scottish Executive priorities and public sector objectives. We have placed a major emphasis on sustaining our credibility and positive influence across social work and strengthening our close working relationships with the Scottish Executive and outside bodies. We have a Management Board that includes independent external members, and we will publish our own annual report and accounts.

## **Our mission**

SWIA's mission is to continuously improve social work services by driving up standards through partnership working, identifying areas for improvement where they need to be addressed and identifying and sharing best practice.

## **Our vision**

"Throughout Scotland, people are able to rely on excellent social work services that improve the quality of their lives."

We will achieve this vision by:

- delivering a national inspection programme that acknowledges good performance in social work services and assists poor performers to improve;
- working with other inspection bodies to deliver integrated inspection programmes;
- encouraging self evaluation and improvement by providers of social work services;
- connecting policy development with practice through a knowledge base derived directly from inspections; and
- providing professionally-based advice to Scottish Ministers.

## **Our strategic priorities**

Our five strategic priorities are focused on making sure that our work has positive outcomes for all of our stakeholders.

**Strategic priority 1**

Improve the quality of social work services across Scotland.

**Strategic priority 2**

Secure improved public confidence in social work services.

**Strategic priority 3**

Build capacity in Scotland's social work services.

**Strategic priority 4**

Inform social work policy development.

**Strategic priority 5**

Be an excellent organisation.

Our annual business plans will set out how will achieve these goals.

**Our values**

We will realise our objectives by building an agency that encourages us to improve our processes while exemplifying the values of integrity, honesty and objectivity. This approach ensures that our activities are:

- always improving/evolving;
- based on the highest standards and best practice;
- respected for the focus on the needs of all people who use services; and
- backed up by informed analysis and intelligence.

In all that we do, we will aim to:

- provide excellent services that are prompt, reliable and responsive to meet our stakeholders' needs;
- manage ourselves well, work with respect for others, build the talent of our staff and value diversity;
- share knowledge, build on best practice and work in effective partnership; and
- operate objectively, consistently and fairly in all our working practices.

## **Our operating context**

### **Scottish social work**

Improving the lives of the people who use social work services is at the centre of all our activities. As the quality of services improves, public confidence in them will increase.

Through our programme of in-depth inspections, review and reporting, we will increase the capacity of social work to:

- improve the quality of individual wellbeing for people and carers who use services across Scotland;
- protect those who are vulnerable at any time in their lives;
- tackle discrimination and empower those at the margins to enter the mainstream of society; and
- support the future economic and social well-being of Scotland.

Our activities will build on the policy priorities set out in *Aiming for Excellence: A White Paper; Modernising social work services in Scotland 1999* (ISBN 0 10 142882 0), as well as the findings emerging from the 21st century Social Work Review ([www.21csocialwork.org.uk](http://www.21csocialwork.org.uk)).

Based on our wide experience in the field, we are well placed to inform policy development. SWIA will take close account of international standards and benchmarking in relation to the performance of social work in Scotland.

### **The Scottish Executive**

As an Executive Agency, we have an obligation to provide timely and accurate advice to Scottish Ministers, including responses to correspondence and questions they receive about social work and social care services. We will:

- aim to meet Ministers' targets for speed of response to correspondence; and
- provide high quality briefing and contributions to relevant ministerial business.

The Scottish Executive's *Changing to Deliver* initiative seeks to achieve more effective teamwork, with greater openness and responsiveness to Ministers, stakeholders and the public. As an Executive agency we are committed to delivery of our services in line with its principles.

Our conduct and approach will be consistent with the business development and continuous improvement approaches of the Business Excellence Model, Investors in People and the Plain English Campaign.

Government guidance in November 2003 provides us with advice on setting targets for executive agencies. Similar guidance on Best Value also applies to how we operate as an agency. We take account of both sets of advice as we develop our activities in the coming three years.

SWIA is currently based in Edinburgh and Glasgow. As our inspection activity increases we will require a presence in other areas of Scotland. We will benefit from the potential advantages of a more dispersed and more locality-linked approach. We will manage any moves carefully to safeguard ongoing work and the effective delivery of our objectives.

A range of recent and forthcoming legislation will have an impact on the work of SWIA. We will evaluate and address the implications for ourselves and for the public accountability of the organisations that we inspect.

### **SWIA inspection delivery**

One of our key operating principles is to build on available information and to work in partnership with the other inspection organisations. This will help minimise the burden of regulation for service providers.

SWIA aims to inspect all local authority social work services on a three year cycle. This commitment is in addition to integrated inspection activity and policy support activities.

We are now mid-way through a programme of performance inspection of local authority criminal justice services. This programme will be completed by March 2007. We will consider how best to deliver criminal justice inspection in light of the Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Bill.

We are coupling this increase in local authority inspections with new integrated inspection activity, initially in the areas of learning disability and older people.

We will work in partnership with local authorities as they seek to bring about improvements. Our reports will be accessible and be written to inform people and carers who use services on progress. Where it is necessary we will maintain close contact with a local authority and issue further reports

We will take a proportionate approach to inspection follow-up in order to minimise burdens and to further develop and enhance the internal capacity of local authorities to improve services.

By contributing to cross-sectoral and cross-service inspection developments we will refocus and extend our strategic partnerships and joint ventures with bodies concerned with inspection, audit and other evaluations. Where appropriate we will work with the Care Commission, HM Inspectorate of Education, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Mental Welfare Commission, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, Communities Scotland and Audit Scotland.

Similarly, we will extend our strategic partnerships with key bodies concerned with social work service developments, including higher education bodies, National Training Initiatives and Careers Scotland. We will also work strategically with regulatory bodies such as the Scottish Social Services Council which works to raise the standards of practice through adherence to the Codes of Practice.

SWIA works in close collaboration with Scottish Executive departments and with the organisations representing delivery agencies, such as CoSLA, the Association of Directors of Social Work, NHS Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service, and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland.

### **Management and staff structure**

The re-organisation of the former Social Work Services Inspectorate has included the introduction of a new Chief Social Work Inspector and a strengthened team of inspectors and support staff. We aim to enhance the core team by developing peer inspection and further use of co-opted inspectors.

Our staff bring well developed skills and experience and we value highly the contributions each of them makes to the Agency. Over the coming year we will work to make sure that our staff and the wider Scottish community see the Agency as a successful organisation with a reputation for excellence.

### **Business planning**

Over the period of this corporate plan we will continue to develop a confident approach to business planning, increasing its clarity and impact on our business. We will strengthen the links between budgets, key work programmes and management of change, and increase stakeholders' input to our planning.

### **Standards of service**

We set the highest standards for the quality of all our services, including inspections and reviews. The SWIA Charter will set out our standards of service. It will explain the ground rules for inspections or reviews and how we aim to make sure that our work is independent, open and impartial, with its focus firmly on the people who use social work services. We will monitor all our work and where necessary improve our consistency in evaluation and reporting.

We will agree the strategic priorities and targets contained in this corporate plan with Scottish Ministers. We will also agree and set out our annual objectives in our business plans and we will continue to report on our success in achieving these objectives in our reports to Scottish Ministers. The Plan and Annual Reports will be available on our website.

### **Audit**

The Auditor General for Scotland audits our accounts and is also responsible for the general external audit of our services. Our accounts form part of our Annual Report. Internal auditors also inspect and report on how we achieve sound day-to-day financial management.

We have taken account of advice from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and we will consult stakeholders in revising how we deal with complaints about the way in which SWIA conducts its business. We will publicise the procedure.

We will establish an Advisory Group to support the work of the Agency. The group will have representation from people who use services, the sector and other stakeholders.

### **Evaluation of SWIA**

We plan to use the European Business Excellence model to guide our self-evaluation. We use a range of techniques and quality tools to set our strategic objectives, and to identify and use a range of measures of success. We are affiliated to Investors in People through the Scottish Executive and will actively pursue recognition by Scotland's Health at Work scheme.

Part of the process to specify our objectives is identifying and evaluating the associated risks. We will keep a risk register and make sure that we manage these risks to achieve our targets.

Central to our independent inspections and reviews is the way we take into account the views of our varied stakeholders, including people and carers who use services, social workers, occupational therapists, social work managers and other staff. We will gather these views across all sectors using questionnaires and face to face meetings.

These views will help us identify positive changes and improvements in the way we work.

In the interests of objectivity, we will ask independent research organisations to review aspects of our work.

Ultimately, our success will be judged against the general objectives and key targets agreed with Scottish Ministers and our business plan performance measures. These will match the framework of our strategic priorities.

## **2005 - 2008 achieving change and improvement**

We are fully committed to developing and providing a range of new inspections while minimising burdens on local authorities and other providers.

### **Key Targets**

We will set ambitious targets for achieving change and improvement during the period of this Plan. They will be found in our Business Plan, published on our website.

### **Performance and integrated inspections**

#### **Local authority performance inspections**

- Pilot initial local authority social work performance inspections across three local authorities by January 2006. Complete inspections of a further five authorities by August 2006.
- Set out subsequent inspection programmes with a view to completing the programme of 32 local authorities by the end of 2008.

#### **Criminal justice services performance inspections**

- Complete cycle of inspections by 2007.

#### **Integrated inspection activity**

- Borders follow-up inspection.
- Develop integrated Inspection of Learning Disability Services by March 2006.
- Audit of Substance Misuse Services by December 2006.
- Develop integrated inspection of services for older people.

#### **Building capacity in the Social Work system**

- Participate in and conduct thematic inspections designed to respond to policy needs and promote improvement in key areas of provision and practice.
- Identify, collate, disseminate and promote good practice identified in inspections (including reports, audit tools, meetings, seminars, conferences, bulletins, website and professional engagement and dialogue).

- Support self-evaluation (for example through the provision of guides and audit tools).

### **Support for policy development**

- Undertake evaluative tasks and investigations agreed with Ministers and Scottish Executive officials.
- Provide professional advice to the Scottish Executive, as appropriate.
- Provide direct advice to Ministers.
- Provide advice to national bodies, local authority staff and key managers.
- Ensure highly developed knowledge of social work through liaison activity, discussion with stakeholders, participation in networks and consideration of evidence from practice.
- Provide secondments to and from the Scottish Executive.

### **Development of SWIA as a best value organisation**

- Integrate corporate services and inspection activity at the management board.
- Establish business processes to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- Publish annual report and accounts.

### **Deliver effective communications**

- Enable dissemination of inspection-led knowledge across the sector.
- Share best practice