

Draft Statistics Plan 2008-09 Social Work Inspection Agency

1. Background

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Ministers under the terms of the Scotland Act 1998 and related legislation. SWIA's powers of inspection are contained within Joint Inspection of Children's Services and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Act 2006; Children (Scotland) Act 1995; and Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001.

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.

Our core objective is to promote excellent social work services and generate improvements in standards, quality and positive outcomes for service users in Scotland.

Whilst SWIA is an independent Agency, we work closely with all relevant departments in the Scottish Government. SWIA also works closely with other inspectorates within the Scottish Government, with Audit Scotland and the Care Commission.

The role of the Statistics group within SWIA is to collect, analyze and present information to support local authority performance inspections, multi agency inspections and criminal justice inspections. We also support SWIA's work in the provision of independent professional advice drawn from inspection evidence.

2. Purpose

To set out and invite feedback on plans for statistical work in the SWIA statistics team. Effective planning, based on consultation with users internally and externally is an important requirement of the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

3. Products Planned for 2008-09

The following information and analyses have been drawn together to support Inspections and support monitoring and self-evaluation by social work services. Following the pilot inspections, revisions were made to the methodology, and following consultation a standard output for inspection teams has been agreed.

Efforts have been made to exploit ICT, use existing data sources and automate production of information as much as possible.

Sector/area of support	Content
Performance inspections	In the first phase of inspection, we collect the views of service users, carers, stakeholders, and social work staff on a wide range of issues. Existing evidence from across Government, health and inspectorates and regulators is analysed in a 'key statistics' document for each inspection team.
Multi agency inspections	In the first phase of inspection, we collect the views of service users, carers, stakeholders, and social work staff on a wide range of issues. Existing evidence from across education, health and housing in particular is analysed, as well as information from the voluntary and independent sectors. Methodologies for learning disability services and substance misuse services are still being developed following pilot inspections last year, efficiencies in methodology and data handling will be required. The development of core statistics to feed into the model of proportionate inspection of older peoples services is being developed. In 2008 the first inspection of high risk offenders will be undertaken. Statisticians will be involved in the development of methodology for the inspection, and statistical analysis as required.
Criminal justice inspections	The criminal justice inspection cycle is now complete. Further development in integrating the criminal justice and performance inspections into a single inspection is required.

All of the team's statistical analysis is free from political influence and is produced to a high quality. The statistics, collected through the performance inspections and published by SWIA are branded official statistics. These are social work services staff survey, social work service users survey, and the carers survey. These surveys collect data on the perceptions of these groups about the delivery and impact of, and key outcomes from, service provision. These statistics are produced as far as possible in line with the National Statistics Code of Practice, and are published on the SWIA website.

Statisticians work closely with local authorities, Scottish Government, and other inspectorates to ensure that information being collected is appropriate and relevant, whilst ensuring burden on data providers is kept to a minimum. SWIA ensure that best practice is followed for data collection and that existing sources are used where possible. Data sharing agreements are in place where appropriate.

All of this helps local authorities improve the quality and accuracy of their own data for their own Management Information purposes, which in turn enables them to reliably self-evaluate their own performance and compare how they are performing against others.

4. The National Performance Framework & Government Purpose

The work of the SWIA statistics team is ultimately designed to support the delivery of the Government's purpose and Strategic Objectives. Although SWIA statistics do not directly feed into national indicators, SWIA methodology has been linked with the single outcome agreements where relevant, in order that performance inspection links in with existing and new local authority processes. Any information required for inspection purposes will therefore not be 'in addition to' but part of the performance management information used by the local authorities. The work of SWIA, including that of the statisticians, supports the development of self evaluation and self monitoring by local authorities, supporting the process whereby local authorities report on their single outcome agreements and the national indicators. The local authorities are integral to the development of the self evaluation model. This self evaluation model will link directly into the local authority single outcome agreements and will be used for local performance management.

Outcomes data for social work services is collected from staff, service users and carers. This is published on the SWIA website, and is also available to policy colleagues within the Scottish Government.

5. Developments in Statistics, Methodology and Quality

The first full cycle of local authority social work services performance inspections will be complete in early 2009. The quantitative and qualitative evidence collected during the inspections will be used for:

- **National figures** – there is currently no national picture of social work services in Scotland. The statistical evidence gathered during the performance inspections will be used to develop the national 'averages' on the provision of social work services, their impact and outcomes in Scotland. In the future these will form part of the baseline for self evaluation and the continuous improvement in standards, quality and positive outcomes for service users.
- **Development of proportionate inspection model** – in response to the move towards proportionate inspection, the SWIA statistics will feed into the development of a model for proportionate inspection. Initial work has begun on a core dataset for older peoples services following the pilot multi agency inspections of older peoples services. This will be extended to performance inspections to allow targeted proportionate inspection, with a focus on minimising the burden of inspection (including data collection) on local authorities.
- **Development of SWIA as a centre of excellence for social work services** – Although SWIA statistics are published on the website, further input from the statisticians is required in order to develop SWIA as the centre of excellence for social work services. In part this will include further analysis of the SWIA statistics in order to improve social work in Scotland by disseminating inspection-led knowledge and providing professional advice for policy development.

6. Developing methods, expertise, skills and quality

During 2008-09 there is a focus on completing the performance inspection cycle and undertaking full analysis of the datasets collected by SWIA. The statistics collected by SWIA during the performance inspections focus specifically on outcomes, and are the first datasets containing national data on social work services in Scotland. In order to develop the analyses to the full, consideration is currently being given to expanding the statistics team in order to undertake this analyses, which will include the first national 'benchmarks' for social work services in Scotland. In addition, the methodologies for multi agency inspections require further development, based on the pilot inspections undertaken last year, and a move to develop a model for use in proportionate inspection is being developed for both the older peoples services and for performance inspections. This developmental work will develop a strong in-house knowledge of both the statistical and professional social work issues that arise in bringing in data from various data sources into a single model, to deriving benchmark figures from statistics collected locally across time.

The statistics and analysis must be coherent, relevant, accurate and timely, to meet the dual purposes of internal methodological development and external continuous development of social work services by local authorities.

7. Improving Dissemination and Increasing External Engagement

The SWIA website has been significantly improved, with a section now publishing the statistics collected from service users, carers, social work services staff and from the file reading exercise. Continued improvements to the website are planned to improve dissemination of information from inspection. In order to generate improvements in the standards, quality and positive outcomes for users of social work services in Scotland, further analysis of the national statistics are required and all information fed back to the local authorities, social work profession, policy makers and the independent and voluntary sectors.

In practice much of SWIA's work is conducted on the basis of co-operation with local authorities, other inspectorates and regulators. We work with colleagues across the Scottish Government, and other inspectorates (in particular HMle and Care Commission) to ensure that we implement best practice for data collection and data sharing. We participate in the cross-inspectorate group, which consists of analytical staff from SWIA, HMle, HMlc, Communities Scotland, Audit Scotland, Care Commission, NHS Quality Scotland, and Inspectorate of procurator Fiscal Services. The purpose of the group is to share methodologies and information to enable efficiencies and sharing of best practice across scrutiny bodies.

We continue our focus on efficiency improvements to data collection through maximizing the use of technology to improve data collection and analysis systems. Local authorities and other relevant organisations (such as carers organisations) are asked to complete an inspection evaluation questionnaire after inspection. This gathers information on the delivery, impact and outcomes of inspection, including data collection, and the burden of inspection. This information is used to continually improve the way inspection is undertaken, including the way data is collected and

the quality of the data collected. It will also be used to inform the development of proportionate inspection model, and the methodologies for the multi agency inspections.

SWIA statisticians are represented on a number of relevant groups, notably the Knowledge Management Board, Care Commission Knowledge Management Group, LASWS Children and Families Group, LASWS Staffing Group, LASWS Community Care Group, and the Adult Social Care Network. There are also regular meetings with Scottish Government and ISD statisticians.

6. Statistics Reform and the UK Statistics Authority

The Statistics and Registration Service Act, which extends to Scotland, commenced on 1 April 2008. The Act created a new non-Ministerial department, now known as the UK Statistics Authority, with a statutory responsibility to promote and safeguard the quality of official statistics that serve the public good. Jim Mather MSP, the Scottish Minister with responsibility for statistics, welcomed the UK Statistics Authority to Scotland at an event at the Scottish Parliament on 19 June. This coincided with the publication of the Scottish Government response to the Statistics Reform consultation, available at www.scotland.gov.uk/StatisticsReform.

The fundamental change that the Act brings is that the Authority is required to assess all Official Statistics that are currently branded as National Statistics, and any other Official Statistics put forward for National Statistics status by Ministers, against the Code of Practice.

The Authority will be launching a consultation on the new Code in the next couple of months. This consultation will also include the Authority's draft principles and procedures for assessment. We expect that the Authority's assessment process will involve statistics producers and users.

The SWIA statistics team will continue to meet requirements for the handling and release of statistics, for disclosure control, for quality assurance, and for other areas of professional competency. We will continue to work with other statisticians across the government in groups which consider the impact of statistics reform and any recommendations will be implemented as required.

7. How to comment on the statistics plan

The Scottish Government is happy to receive comments on the 2008-09 plan at any time throughout the year. If you wish to comment on Social Work Inspection Agency statistics plan please contact

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Alternatively if you wish to raise more general issues regarding the Scottish Government Statistics , you should contact

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