

PERFORMANCE INSPECTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Information Leaflet



This leaflet sets out what performance inspections are and how they can assist local authorities to improve social work services.

What is the purpose of performance inspections?

The purpose of performance inspections is to:

- tell the public how well people are being served by their local social work services;
- help these services to improve;
- help safeguard the interests of people, who use services, and carers; and
- work with local authorities to develop their own approach to improving services.

What is a Performance Inspection?

It is an examination of all local authority social work functions. It will take place every three years.

After analysing a wide selection of material about the local authority and the social work services which it provides or commissions, a team of SWIA inspectors spends about two weeks in the area to examine the services. The inspectors are people who have wide experience of social work services across Scotland. The team includes associate inspectors – who may come from senior management teams in other local authorities or have specialist knowledge. The inspection team also includes a lay inspector (a member of the public with an interest in social work services) and a carer inspector.

Each inspection focuses on the approach to continuous improvement of the local authority. It results in a published report which will deliver overall conclusions about social work services.

The report sets out the key evidence gathered during the inspection and identifies strengths and good practice as well as areas for development. It gives an overview of social work services, but does not give a detailed evaluation of every aspect of the work. The whole process takes about six months.

In response to this inspection report, the local authority will produce an action plan setting out how it will make any changes that are needed. This must be agreed with SWIA. There will be a jointly agreed programme for monitoring how the plan is put into effect.

What areas will a performance inspection cover?

Each performance inspection report includes:

- the overall context - a description of the local authority, including population, urban / rural characteristics, and key issues such as employment and deprivation levels;
- a broad description of the organisation of social work services within the local authority;
- a broad overview of the social work services delivered and commissioned by the local authority; and
- other partners involved in the delivery of outcomes for people, such as NHS Boards.

In particular, the inspection report covers six key questions for local authorities to answer:

- what key outcomes have we achieved for people who use services?
- what impact have we had on people, who use services, and other stakeholders?
- how good is our delivery of key processes?
- how good is our management?
- how good is our leadership?
- what is our capacity for improvement?

How will we carry out a performance inspection?

A variety of methods are used to judge how well people's needs are being met by services and how well the local authority has organised itself to maintain and improve services.

These include:

- interviews with people, who use services, and carers;
- interviews with people who are responsible for arranging or delivering services;
- surveys of and other methods of involving people, who use services, and carers;
- staff surveys;
- analysis of case files;
- meetings with representatives from a range of organisations and groups; and

- visits to places where social work services are provided.

We want to provide a realistic picture, finding out both where services work well and where improvement is needed. We will not duplicate the work of other regulatory and inspection bodies such as the Care Commission and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe). We will collaborate closely with them to obtain the relevant information they hold.

How can other partners become involved?

Best practice emphasises the importance of local authorities working in partnership with other agencies, such as voluntary organisations, to plan, arrange and deliver social care in their area.

Integrated working, for example between NHS Boards and local authorities, provides real opportunities for partnership working in planning, commissioning and delivering the whole range of social work services.

The importance of working together across agencies in order to develop good quality family support services and to protect children is a key feature in children's services. This means that partners and other stakeholders have a crucial role in providing inspectors with information about what works well and what needs to change.

What can you expect of the inspection team?

You can expect the inspectors to:

- approach their task in a thorough, professional manner;
- carry official identification;
- treat you with courtesy and respect; and
- follow SWIA's Code of Conduct.

Further information

If you are not sure about anything or have any queries ask the inspector who interviews you or contact the lead inspector.

More detailed information is contained in the general *Guide to Performance Inspections in Scotland*, which sets out the rationale behind the performance inspection programme and the structure of the inspection process.

There is also a *Performance Inspection Handbook* that takes you chronologically through the different phases of the performance inspection process and the activities associated with them. It contains materials such as templates, forms, protocols and briefing materials.

All these documents are available on our website: www.swia.gov.uk

An Easy Read version of this document is available on request.

We hope you find this leaflet a helpful guide to performance inspections in Scotland.

If you would like to know more, please contact:

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PERFORMANCE INSPECTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Information leaflet for staff



This leaflet sets out what performance inspections are and how they can assist local authorities to improve social work services. It also describes how staff are involved in inspections.

What is the purpose of performance inspections?

The purpose of performance inspections is to:

- tell the public how well they are being served by their local social work services;
- help these services to improve;
- help safeguard the interests of people, who use services, and carers; and
- work with local authorities to develop their own approach to improving services.

What is a performance inspection?

A performance inspection is an examination of the social work services in a local authority. It takes place every three years.

After analysing a wide selection of material about the local authority and the services it provides, a team of SWIA inspectors, together with associate and sessional inspectors, spends about two weeks in the area to examine the services. The inspectors are people who have wide experience of social work services across Scotland. The team also includes a lay inspector (a member of the public with an interest in social work services), and a carer inspector.

Each performance inspection results in a published report, which delivers the overall conclusions on how well local people are being served and how well placed the authority is to sustain and improve performance.

The report sets out the key evidence gathered during the inspection and identifies strengths and good practice as well as areas for improvement. It will seek to give an overview of social work but will not deliver a detailed evaluation of every aspect of all services. The inspection and the report will identify key issues and explore or comment upon these in some detail.

In response to the inspection report, the local authority produces an action plan setting out how it will make the changes that are needed. This must be agreed with SWIA. There is a jointly agreed programme for monitoring how the plan is put into effect.

What areas will a performance inspection cover?

Each performance inspection report includes:

- the overall context - a description of the local authority, including population, urban / rural characteristics, and key issues such as employment and deprivation levels;
- a broad description of the organisation of social work services within the local authority;
- a broad overview of the social work services delivered and commissioned by the local authority; and
- other partners involved in the delivery of outcomes for people, such as NHS Boards.

In particular, the inspection report will cover six key questions for local authorities to answer:

1. what key outcomes have we achieved for people who use services?
2. what impact have we had in meeting the needs of people who use services?
3. how good is our delivery of key processes?
4. how good is our management?
5. how good is our leadership?
6. what is our capacity for improvement?

How do we carry out a performance inspection?

A variety of methods are used to evaluate how well people are served by social work services and how well the local authority has organised itself to maintain and improve services. These include:

- interviews with people, who use services, and carers;
- interviews with people who are responsible for arranging or delivering services ;
- an analysis of questionnaires that are sent to staff and the local authority's key partners and stakeholders;
- an analysis of questionnaires that are sent to people, who use services, and carers;
- an analysis of case files;
- meetings with representatives from a range of organisations and groups; and
- visits to places where social work services are provided.

We want to achieve a realistic picture, finding out both about where services work well and where improvement is needed.

How can staff become involved?

Staff have a crucial role in providing inspectors with information about what works well and what needs to change. There are a number of ways in which you may become involved.

1. Staff questionnaire

Questionnaires are sent to a representative, randomly selected cross-section of staff. If you are not included in the sample but would like to discuss the inspection with SWIA, please contact the lead inspector.

2. Visits

Inspectors visit places where services are provided, such as reception, residential or day care facilities and team offices. They seek the views of staff and provide the opportunity for them to talk about the issues that concern them.

3. Meetings with staff

The inspection team will also spend time meeting different groups of staff (either individually or as a focus group), to discuss their views.

4. Follow up of individual cases

The inspectors look at a sample of case files from each group of people who use services. Some of these cases are selected for follow up so that inspectors can meet the people who use services and staff who are involved. This is not an inspection of individual practice. It allows staff to describe in their own way how they have carried out their responsibilities, what has gone well or not so well, and how improvements could be made.

What can we expect of each other?

We expect you to:

- co-operate in the arrangements made for the performance inspection;
- prepare for any involvement you may have;
- talk openly about your work;
- help us to distinguish between facts and opinions; and
- take responsibility for your contribution to the process.

You can expect us to:

- approach our task in a thorough, professional manner;
- carry official identification;
- treat you with courtesy and respect; and
- follow SWIA's Code of Conduct.

Particular concerns

The inspection is focused on social work services as a whole, not on individual practice. If inspectors find cases or conduct which cause particular concern, they will raise this formally with a senior manager. It is then for the senior manager to see that appropriate action is carried out.

If you have concerns about the way the performance inspection team is carrying out its work, you should raise these either through your line manager or the lead inspector.

Further information

If you have any queries ask the inspector who interviews you or contact the lead inspector.

More detailed information is contained in a series of leaflets which are available on our website: www.swia.gov.uk

There is also a *Performance Inspection Handbook* that takes you chronologically through the different phases of the performance inspection process and the activities associated with them. This is available on our website: www.swia.gov.uk.

We hope you find this leaflet a helpful guide to performance inspections in Scotland.

If you would like to know more, please contact:

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PERFORMANCE INSPECTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Information leaflet for partners and stakeholders



This leaflet sets out what performance inspections are and how they can assist local authorities to improve social work services. It also describes how partners and stakeholders can be involved.

What is the purpose of performance inspections?

By law, the thirty-two local authorities in Scotland have responsibility for:

- planning social work services; and
- making arrangements for the delivery of social work services.

Local authorities therefore have a key role in protecting the most vulnerable members of the community and in meeting their social care needs. This includes children and young people, older people, people who have mental health problems, people with learning disabilities and people who have physical disabilities or sensory impairments. Social work services also help those who take on a caring role for others, including young carers.

The purpose of performance inspections is to:

- tell the public how well they are being served by their local social work services;
- help these services to improve;
- help safeguard the interests of people, who use services, and carers; and
- work with local authorities to develop their own approach to improving services.

What is a performance inspection?

A performance inspection is an examination of all the local authority's social work services functions. It takes place every three years.

After analysing a wide selection of material about the local authority and the services it provides, a team of SWIA inspectors, together with associate and sessional inspectors, spends about two weeks in the area to examine the services. The inspectors are people who have a wide experience of social work services across Scotland. The team also includes a lay inspector (a member of the public with an interest in social work services) and a carer inspector.

Each performance inspection results in a published report which sets out the overall conclusions on how well local people are being served and how well placed the authority is to sustain and improve performance.

The report sets out the key evidence gathered during the inspection and identifies strengths and good practice as well as areas for improvement. It seeks to give an overview of social work but does not deliver a detailed evaluation of every aspect of all services. The inspection and the report identify key issues and explore or comment upon these in some detail.

In response to the inspection report, the local authority produces an action plan setting out how it will make any changes that are needed. This must be agreed with SWIA. There is a jointly agreed programme for monitoring how the plan is put into effect.

What areas will a performance inspection cover?

Each performance inspection report includes:

- the overall context - a description of the local authority, including population, urban / rural characteristics, and key issues such as employment and deprivation levels;
- a broad description of the organisation of social work services within the local authority;
- a broad overview of the social work services delivered and commissioned by the local authority; and
- an overview of partnership working with other partners involved in the delivery of outcomes for people, such as NHS Boards, police and education services, provider organizations in both the voluntary and private sectors.

In particular, the inspection report covers six key questions for local authorities to answer:

1. What key outcomes have we achieved for people who use services?
2. What impact have we had in meeting the needs of people who use services?
3. How good is our delivery of key processes?
4. How good is our management?
5. How good is our leadership?
6. What is our capacity for improvement?

How do we carry out a performance inspection?

A variety of methods are used to evaluate how well people are served by social work services and how well the local authority has organised itself to maintain and improve services. These include:

- interviews with people, who use services, and carers;
- interviews with people who are responsible for arranging or delivering services;
- an analysis of questionnaires that are sent to staff and the local authority's key partners and stakeholders;
- an analysis of questionnaires that are sent to people, who use services, and carers;
- an analysis of case files;
- meetings with representatives from a range of organisations and groups; and
- visits to places where social work services are provided.

We want to achieve a realistic picture, finding out both about where services work well and where improvement is needed.

How can partners become involved?

Originally, local authorities provided most services directly. They organised and managed day centres, home care services, residential and other services. Now the emphasis is on local authorities working in partnership with other organizations (such as NHS Boards) to plan, arrange and deliver social care in their area. Some local authorities continue to deliver services but increasingly they purchase services such as domiciliary and residential care from a range of providers in the voluntary and private sectors.

New organisational arrangements are emerging across the whole range of local authority social work service responsibilities. For example, Joint Future arrangements between NHS Boards and local authorities provide real opportunities for partnership working in planning, commissioning and delivering the whole range of social care services.

The importance of working together across agencies in order to develop good quality family support services and to protect children is a key feature in children's services.

Similarly, the protection of vulnerable adults depends on joint planning on the part of agencies, coupled with better information, communication and effective collaboration at the point of service delivery.

Programmes such as Supporting People have encouraged partnerships involving local authorities and a wide range of providers to promote more opportunities for people who use services to live independently.

In addition, disabled people should be able to benefit from the increased opportunities for employment made available through successful regeneration partnerships.

All this means that partners and other stakeholders have a crucial role in providing inspectors with information about what works well and what needs to change. There are a number of ways in which you may become involved:

1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are sent to the local authorities' key partners, agencies and organisations. The results provide information on the quality of social work services and the way in which the local authority is managing the social care agenda. If you have not been included in the sample, but would like to discuss the inspection with SWIA, please contact the lead inspector.

2. Visits

Inspectors visit places where social work services are provided such as residential or day care facilities and team offices. They seek the views of people who use services and staff and provide opportunity for them to talk about the issues that concern them.

3. Meetings with groups

The inspection team spend time meeting different groups of people, including representatives from other departments, agencies and organisations.

4. Meeting with individuals

Inspectors will ask to interview some key stakeholders individually, to follow up on particular issues such as planning, commissioning, joint arrangements for service provision and developing the workforce.

What can we expect of each other?

The performance inspection is most effective if all those involved:

- co-operate in arrangements made for the performance inspection;
- prepare for any involvement they may have;
- talk openly about their work; and

- take responsibility for their contribution to the process.

You can expect us to:

- approach our task in a thorough, professional manner;
- carry official identification;
- treat you with courtesy and respect; and
- follow SWIA's Code of Conduct.

Particular concerns

The inspection is focused on social work services as a whole, not on individual workers' practice. If inspectors find cases or conduct which cause particular concern, they will raise this formally with the senior manager. It is then for the senior manager to see that appropriate action (including any necessary investigation) is carried out.

Further information

If you are not sure about anything or have any queries ask the inspector who interviews you or contact the lead inspector.

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