

## PERFORMANCE INSPECTIONS PROVIDE “SOUND BASE” FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

With the publication in September of the report for South Ayrshire, SWIA's comprehensive programme of Performance Inspections of social work services in all 32 Scottish councils has now been completed.

The ground-breaking programme of systematic inspection and evaluation that began in 2005 has provided a unique store of knowledge. It is proving invaluable for practitioners, academics and many others involved with social work.

SWIA Inspector Judith Tait led the team carrying out inspection number 32. Recognising its significance as the last in the initial series, she told *Inspection Matters*: “The main aim of the programme has been to support the raising of standards and ultimately to improve people's lives.

“This latest report has met with a positive response, much as we have found throughout the whole programme. The new directorate team at South Ayrshire has accepted the inspection findings and recommendations. They are moving forward positively from there, developing an action plan and looking forward to showing the improvements that will help to make people's lives better.

“Altogether, the programme has provided a sound evidence base for moving on to the next stage of SWIA's work, which will introduce more proportionate and targeted inspections of services.”

- At [www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk), all 32 Performance Inspection reports and summaries are available in the Publications section. Excel files of statistics at local authority and national level are available in the Data and Analysis section.

### PROGRESS ON ISLA

The initial scrutiny level assessment (ISLA) is now well underway in ten local authority areas.

The ISLA is the means by which SWIA inspectors assess the required amount of external scrutiny of social work services. It is important to stress that the ISLA is a desk-top, risk assessment exercise carried out by inspectors, supplemented in this first year by file reading. It is therefore intended to operate with minimum impact on the council.

In this new type of assessment, inspectors consider risk, need for improvement, current and planned self-evaluation activity in the local authority, and the work of other scrutiny bodies. This results in a risk assessment and a prioritised list of targeted, proportionate inspection activities.

The councils where the ISLA is currently being carried out are Angus, Fife, South Lanarkshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, Perth and Kinross, Aberdeenshire, Shetland, and Orkney.

SWIA plans to evaluate the first ten ISLAs, and details will be included in future issues of *Inspection Matters*.

### Inside *Inspection Matters*

- Working towards SWIA's new methodology: update on overview, self-evaluation tools and latest consultation events
- Inspections on learning disability and prison-based social work services
- Visit to Europe and visitors from China

# Work progresses on overview project

As the final report in the programme of Performance Inspections was published in September, good progress was being made on the project to provide an overview of how Scottish social work services are delivered.

In the July 2009 *Inspection Matters*, we reported on the setting-up of the high-level publications group to undertake this major piece of work, using the unique store of evidence and information contained in all SWIA reports to date, including performance, multi-agency and special inspections. The project also involves the publication of two practitioners' guides.

SWIA Inspector Christina Naismith, who is leading the work, said that all was going well, with the overview report due to be published at the end of February 2010. "Before then, we will be publishing the

practitioners' guides, with a launch date to be arranged for them at the end of January," she said.

"The chronologies guide, drawing on information held by agencies to document the significant events in a child or adult's life, is in the final stages of development. We've consulted widely with organisations, including the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Local Practitioners Forums.

"The other practitioners' guide will focus on effective management in social work recording, and it has also been widely consulted upon with a range of partners. This guide will make clear connections between effective recording and its management and in turn the impact on the quality of social services for people who use them."

## E-TOOL TO HELP COUNCILS IN SELF-EVALUATION

SWIA's new electronic self-evaluation tool for local authorities went on show at a recent "Changing Lives" seminar on planning and delivering services suited to the needs of individuals.

Depute Chief Inspector Gill Ottley and Inspector Gerry Hart were representing SWIA at the "Embedding Personalisation in Social Care" event, held in Glasgow in late September, with an invited audience of health and social care providers. The SWIA team outlined the development of the methodology for self-evaluation in social work services, where the focus is on improving service delivery. Colleagues from the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) were there to demonstrate the online tool that is a new part of SWIA's "toolkit" to help councils in their self-evaluation task.

IRISS has developed the e-tool from the database written by Gerry Hart, and a number of local authorities are already using it. Gerry explained: "The

e-tool allows councils to analyse their performance against SWIA's Performance Improvement Model (PIM) and to identify areas for improvement. It provides them with all the planning and monitoring tools needed for improvement. Over time, it creates a comprehensive record.

"The e-tool has the facility for councils to create accounts for their own staff, but it is totally secure for each authority. SWIA can't look at anything on it unless the council actively chooses to share it with us. If they decide to do so, they can send it to us at the click of a button, and it may of course help reduce the future scrutiny burden for them.

"The new product is an important part of the toolkit that we've been developing for councils, accompanying the main *Guide to Supported Self-Evaluation*, which we published last February. It is the kind of support that we need to offer councils, as we move to more proportionate and risk-based scrutiny."

## SWIA publishes “good practice” guide to strategic commissioning

SWIA’s self-evaluation toolkit now contains the first of a series of three “good practice” guides, each focusing on a specific topic, supporting a detailed professional evaluation of that theme.

The newly-published guide, *Taking a Closer Look at Strategic Commissioning in Social Work Services*, is available at [www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk), in the publications section (click on *Guide to Supported Self-Evaluation*). It is designed to help councils, working with key strategic partners, to evaluate their performance on the strategic commissioning of care and wider supports for adults, children and young people.

Like all SWIA’s self-evaluation products, the guide is intended to be helpful, but its use is not mandatory.

Councils can decide how they want to use the material. However, it does provide the resources to examine strategic commissioning in depth, with four key themes: analyse, plan, do and review.

SWIA has consulted widely over this project. Five councils have helped in the production and testing, and several others have commented on drafts. Much of the work has been carried out by one of SWIA’s Sessional Inspectors, Kathy Somers. Kathy is currently working with Gerry Hart on the other two “good practice” guides that are due for publication soon, on performance management and effective leadership.

# CONSULTATION WIDENS FOR NEW INSPECTION METHODOLOGY

SWIA’s current consultation programme is widening, as we take account of more views that will help shape the new inspection methodology. In the last issue of *Inspection Matters* (July 2009), we highlighted consultation events for local authorities and for people using social work services and their carers. In this issue, we report on two more recent events – the “Inspecting for Excellence” conference for carers, and a special session to gauge the impact on many different groups, taking forward the equality agenda.

### The equality impact

A wide range of organisations that provide support to people who use or want to access social work services was invited to a special consultation event organised by SWIA on 1 October.

The event in the Trades Hall, Glasgow, was open to all the organisations to learn about SWIA’s plans for future inspections and to add their views to those already given by local authorities and others, contributing to our new methodology. Along with the rest of the public sector, we have a legal obligation to make sure that equality considerations of race,

disability and gender are integrated into all our functions.

The consultation event was an opportunity to sound out the groups on the likely impact that the new inspection regime will have on them and the people they support and represent. Invitations went to Scotland-wide organisations right across the social care spectrum, from health and disability groups, to organisations for sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, children and young people, older people and victims of violence.

One of the organisers, SWIA Office Manager Gary Mack, said they were pleased with how the event had gone. “The groups attending on the day took part in discussion groups and completed questionnaires, giving us their comments,” he said. “We’ve also sent out forms to give those unable to attend the opportunity to make their views known.”

Once all the questionnaires are returned and studied, the comments will help make sure that SWIA’s new inspection methodology has a positive impact on all the groups.



Pictured with *A Carer's Induction and Resource Guide* are Shona Robison, Minister for Health (centre), Isobel Anderson, Chair of Carers Scotland Committee, and David Cumming, Depute Chief Inspector of SWIA.

## Inspecting for Excellence

On 1 September, SWIA and Carers Scotland combined to stage a major one-day conference, "Inspecting for Excellence".

The event in Glasgow brought together carers and representatives from local authorities, voluntary organisations, carers' centres, the NHS and the Scottish Government, to learn about the findings from SWIA's inspections that are important for carers and to identify what is needed to continue developing services. The conference also provided an opportunity for carer inspectors to say how they had found the inspection experience.

Carers Scotland will be producing a conference report, but a preliminary evaluation by SWIA shows that delegates benefited from the day. The

combination of presentations from the platform and work groups to introduce areas of good practice worked well.

SWIA's Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay, emphasised the vital role played by carer inspectors in the inspection process. "The involvement of unpaid carers as inspectors has allowed us to get a real understanding of what needs to be done to support and improve help for unpaid carers," she said. "This conference has been designed to help learn from and build on the successful user involvement model we have developed with Carers Scotland."

Findings from the inspections show that carers largely value the services and support available to them, but many feel that the range and choice and quality of information could be improved. Inspectors have also

found that the availability of services and support is very uneven across Scotland and carers are generally not treated as full partners in care arrangements. More needs to be done to make sure carers are involved in the planning and delivery of services.

The other main conference speakers were Isobel Allan and Isobel Anderson from Carers Scotland (both carer inspectors) and Shona Robison, MSP, Minister for Health and Sport. The conference was chaired by Cathy Peattie MSP, Convenor of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Carers.

Four areas of good practice were the subject of separate work groups, with each being introduced by a representative from the local authority involved and a carer. The themes of the work groups were:

- improving carers' lives through **support**, focusing particularly on young carers;
- improving carers' lives through **information**, with the emphasis on accessible information and listening to carers;
- improving carers' lives through effective **planning**, with a creative approach to procurement; and

- improving carers' lives through **partnership**, with the kind of shared vision that has led one council to devolve part of its budget to carers' centres, supporting easier access to respite breaks.

As they left the conference, delegates said that it had given them a broader view of what is happening and an insight into work done by other carers. They felt that it had been helpful in the drive to improve the quality of services.

Feedback from the event highlighted a number of issues that can be usefully covered in future, including the importance of young carers' views and the problems of carers in rural communities.

### Some carer inspectors' experiences ...

Being part of the inspection team **boosted my confidence**. It is a way to **help others ... doing something very useful**. We received **good preparation for being part of the team**. We were **welcomed as part of the team**.



### Graphic recording ...

Conference Support Manager Nina Barrett said that the services of two graphic recorders at the “Inspecting for Excellence” conference had been a useful innovation. “They turned blank sheets of paper into a series of engaging notes and illustrations, depicting the main points raised,” she said. “People found this particularly useful to look at during break times, as a way of clarifying some of the issues.”

# Learning disability: a multi-agency inspection of services

People who use services and their carers are adding an important dimension to the multi-agency team currently inspecting learning disability services in parts of Scotland.

As lay inspectors with either a learning disability or a caring role, they are part of the multi-agency team with SWIA, HMIE, the Care Commission and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland.

The team is breaking new ground, working on a themed inspection of services in four council sites and the corresponding health board areas. The three issues under the spotlight are:

- transition pathways;
- lifelong learning opportunities; and
- employment opportunities.

SWIA is leading this work, and lead inspector Steve Porter told *Inspection Matters*: “We are looking at how services are provided locally across these three themes, and how well they fit together. It is a comprehensive inspection of council services, not just social work but education too, and health services.

“The lay inspectors bring an added perspective to the team. They can share their first-hand experience as carers or people using services.

“We have already completed initial file-reading and surveys. We saw the NHS boards in October, and most of the fieldwork is being carried out this month (November). The report is due for publication in April 2010.”

The councils being inspected are Angus, Dumfries and Galloway, East Lothian and West Lothian. The NHS Board areas are Dumfries and Galloway, Lothian and Tayside.

# Planning well underway for inspection of prison-based social work services

A comprehensive inspection of prison-based social work services, covering all penal establishments in Scotland, is planned for 2010.

In April this year, SWIA's Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay, wrote to chief executives, chief social work officers, prison governors and other stakeholders to tell them that an inspection was being planned. Preliminary work this year is to be followed by fieldwork (with the assistance of HM Inspector of Prisons) in 2010. Since April, the Lead Inspector, Paolo Mazzoncini, and colleagues John Waterhouse (Inspector) and Jamie Steed (Inspection Support Manager) have consulted a number of relevant organisations and individuals, which has helped them set up the methodology for the project.

Paolo told *Inspection Matters*: “The last inspection of prison-based social work was back in 1992, when the Social Work Services Inspectorate for Scotland looked at services in seven penal establishments. In this new inspection, we are planning to visit all 15 establishments – 13 public sector and two private sector. Our inspection will

be in keeping with our new approach to scrutiny, which is risk-based, proportionate and does not place unnecessary burdens on local authorities. We will be looking at the important work that prison-based social work services do independently or together with other agencies.

“We've already consulted with the Scottish Prison Service, the Association of Directors of Social Work, the Chair of the Parole Board, and policy colleagues in Justice and Health. On the voluntary side, we've consulted Families Outside, a Scottish support and information charity for prisoners' families.

“We're currently planning three regional events for later in the year with the key people from local authorities and prisons, to explain exactly how the inspection will be run.”

The findings of the inspection will be published in individual reports for local authority providers of prison-based social work services. The inspection team will also pull the findings together in a national report that will highlight key themes and issues, relevant to a wider audience.

# SWIA SHOWS BENEFITS OF MULTI-AGENCY INSPECTIONS AT EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

The European social services conference held in Prague in June was a prime opportunity for SWIA to present the findings of the multi-agency inspections of services for older people (MAISOP) to practitioners, policy-makers and researchers from across Europe, and to emphasise the benefits of joint working.

Led by Chief Inspector Alexis Jay and Dr Colin Currie, Consultant Geriatrician, the workshop on the MAISOP drew a capacity audience, with delegates keen to learn about the development of an approach in tune with the conference theme, “Quality and performance of social services in Europe – better outcomes for people”.

As medical adviser to the MAISOP, Dr Currie had been involved in the two multi-agency inspections carried out on older people’s services, firstly in Tayside and then in Forth Valley. Both inspections were conducted by a joint team from SWIA and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, using data from the NHS Information Services Division.

Dr Currie told *Inspection Matters*: “The main message we got across to delegates in Prague was that health and social care working together will make a measurable difference to outcomes for older people. This became clear from our work on the MAISOP. We found that there is an inverse correlation between the volume and quality of collaborative health and social care in localities, and the use of acute services by older people, particularly in the form of multiple admissions.”

A video outlining the development of the MAISOP helped to get across to delegates the benefits of this approach. It highlighted how the inspections showed a clear variation between the three councils within each of the Forth Valley and Tayside health board areas. It also explained the MAISOP inspection methodology.

Dr Currie said: “At the Prague workshop, we gave delegates an exercise with data about health and social care. We invited them to look at the statistics from different authorities and to decide which was best performing in terms of outcomes for people wanting to stay at home. In the reporting back and general discussion that followed, the MAISOP message came across clearly: that collaborative working between health and social care makes a measurable difference to enabling older people to stay at home.”

## About the conference

The Prague conference was organised by the European Social Network (ESN) in co-operation with the Czech EU presidency. As members of the ESN, SWIA benefited from preferential rates for attendance and was represented there by Alexis Jay, Colin Currie and Depute Chief Inspector Gill Ottley. The small Scottish contingent also included representatives from the Care Commission and Scottish Borders Council.

The three-day conference brought together delegates from over 30 European countries, including Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Gill Ottley commented: “There was a huge potential for shared learning among the countries there. For example, while the Scandinavian countries are grappling with many similar issues to ourselves, such as how to achieve best outcomes, listening to the challenges being faced by others such as Albania in areas like child protection was startling. However, being able to share experiences in this sort of forum may well help them to short-circuit the evolutionary process in developing their services. And it is important that Scotland should have its own voice in this forum, because we have very different social policies from England and Wales, and our contribution is unique.”

- The MAISOP video is available in two parts on the Multi-Agency Inspections page of the SWIA website ([www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk)).



While the main conference language was English, translation services were available for all delegates.

# CHINESE VISIT HIGHLIGHTS GLOBAL CHALLENGES OF AGEING

When the members of a Chinese delegation came to Scotland to find out about care for older people in this country, they left their SWIA hosts struggling to comprehend the enormous challenges that China faces with its soaring elderly population numbers.

In September, a delegation of four government officials and two presidents of hospitals from Henan Province in eastern central China made a rapid five-day tour of the northern edge of Europe, visiting Denmark, Norway, Finland and Scotland. In Scotland, they wanted to learn from SWIA's experience of social work improvement, specifically in social care for older people.

Acting Depute Chief Inspector Richard Fowles and Sessional Inspector Mary Marshall welcomed the delegation to SWIA's Edinburgh office for a presentation about SWIA's work. Richard, who is SWIA's lead inspector for older people's services, told *Inspection Matters*: "The organisers had already said that China has very limited experience in the area of social work.

"The group wanted to understand the background and development of social work here, focusing particularly on the training and support offered to social workers in the care of older people. When we'd given the presentation and started to exchange views and experiences, I was staggered by the sheer weight of numbers that they face.

"In China, the population rose from 820 million in 1970 to 1.3 billion in 2007, a 59 per cent increase in 37 years. Henan Province itself has 100 million inhabitants. Ten per cent of China's 1.3 billion population are older people – that's 130 million. This percentage will rise to 31 per cent by 2050. In addition, between 2001 and 2040, a 300 per cent increase is predicted in the numbers of people with dementia."

Professor Mary Marshall, who has a special interest in dementia care, doubted if the models of care in Scotland and Scandinavia could be relevant in tackling the challenges faced in China.

"What they told us was riveting," she said. "They are urbanising at a great rate. The young working population are moving to the cities, leaving behind the older people in the country areas. The commune can decide to give a small sum of money to people in particular need, but there is no way they could afford the sort of provision we have here."

The inspectors arranged for the delegation to visit Marionville Court, one of City of Edinburgh Council's newest care complexes for older people. Marionville is a joint social work/health project. It is an example of excellent practice, achievable here but sadly not in a developing country such as China. Elderly residents are

grouped in small living units, each for ten people, and the complex includes a day care centre. It is free of barriers and dementia-friendly, providing the flexibility to care for high dependency.

- As a token of their visit, the group presented SWIA with two beautiful silk banners, depicting the ancient heritage of Henan, a province described as China's "cradle of civilisation".

## SWIA PEOPLE

SWIA Inspector **Richard Fowles** has been appointed Acting Depute Chief Inspector.

## NEWS ON INSPECTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

### Recent publications

[Performance Inspection of Stirling Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary \(July\)](#)

[Performance Inspection of Renfrewshire Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary \(August\)](#)

[Performance Inspection of South Ayrshire Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary \(September\)](#)

[Guide to Strategic Commissioning – Taking a closer look at strategic commissioning of social work services \(September\)](#)

## 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](mailto:info@swia.gsi.gov.uk)

**Web:** [www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk)

Register for regular email updates on [www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk)

If you would like SWIA's quarterly newsletter in an alternative format, please contact us with your request.