

SELF-EVALUATION GUIDE 'CRITICAL' IN WAY AHEAD FOR SOCIAL WORK

SWIA's new guide will be critical in the way ahead for social work services in Scotland. This was the message that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop, conveyed to council chief executives and social work directors at the launch in February of the *Guide to Supported Self-evaluation: Building Excellent Social Work Services*.

The Cabinet Secretary highlighted the important role of social work in helping the Scottish Government achieve its aim of a healthier, fairer Scotland. In the particular context of the changing role of scrutiny bodies, she said that SWIA's guide would remain relevant during this time of change.

The Government now expects public bodies to conduct self-evaluation as part of their core responsibilities. The new guide is contributing to building capacity for self-evaluation complemented by rigorous and proportionate scrutiny arrangements. The Cabinet Secretary emphasised that, with effective self-evaluation, there would be less risk of services failing and things going wrong. The self-evaluation process was a key driver in achieving less scrutiny.

Scotland's local authorities have received the guide well, and there were positive comments from senior social work managers who addressed the launch event in February. Gerry Hart, who has led the team behind the development of the guide, told *Inspection Matters*: "Feedback has been very positive, and councils involved in its development and responding to its circulation have welcomed the way that the guide places quality management within a professional social work context and language. It also links fully with the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and this will benefit those authorities committed to using that system."



SWIA will offer practical support and advice in using the self-evaluation guide, with day-to-day guidance for councils coming through link inspectors. Self-evaluation will also make an important contribution to new arrangements for more proportionate and risk-based social work scrutiny that SWIA is currently developing in partnership with local authorities.

As highlighted in previous newsletters, SWIA will shortly publish three additional guides that link to self-evaluation and the general guide. These will focus on specific topics and themes, to support very detailed professional evaluation in social work services. They will cover commissioning practice, performance management and effective leadership.

- *Guide to Supported Self-evaluation: Building Excellent Social Work Services* is available online at www.swia.gov.uk.

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SoLACE Imprint will focus on social work in Scotland

For its first exclusively Scottish issue, the influential SoLACE Foundation Imprint (SFI) is taking social work as its focus. Due to be published in June, the new issue will be a joint venture by SoLACE and SWIA and it promises to provide a selection of stimulating articles, covering all the main themes of social work today.

The SFI is published and issued by *Public*, the Guardian's monthly magazine for senior public professionals, with the aim of promoting public service improvement and excellence. The forthcoming issue will have an editorial introduction jointly penned by Alexis Jay (Chief Social Work Inspector), David Hume (Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council) and Sue Bruce (Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council).

The special issue promises some outstanding articles. Bob Winter will give his personal perspective on the changing nature of social work. After a career in social work (latterly as Director for Strathclyde Region), Bob is now gracing the office of Lord Provost of Glasgow.

Another former head of social work to contribute to the issue is David Kelly. Previously Director of Social Work, Housing and Health for West Lothian Council and then Director of West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership, David now works in the private sector with tele-healthcare providers Tunstall, as their Managing Director for Scotland and Ireland. He will write on the use of IT in terms of quality assurance and assistive technology.

Contributors from the voluntary sector will include Annie Gunner Logan, Director of Community Care Providers Scotland. The inspirational speech delivered by writer and broadcaster Richard Holloway (former Bishop of Edinburgh) at the 40th Anniversary event of the Association of Directors of Social Work in February will be adapted for publication as a keynote article.

Alexis Jay told *Inspection Matters*: "We are all particularly pleased that social work should have been chosen as the topic for this first exclusively Scottish issue. My personal hope for this joint venture with SoLACE is that the imprint will serve as promotional material demonstrating some of the high quality services in social work in Scotland."

TRAINING SESSIONS FOR CARER INSPECTORS

Lay inspectors have been playing an important part in SWIA's performance inspection teams since the first pilot inspections of local authority social work services in 2005. These members of the public bring their own unique perspective to the inspection, helping to establish the impact of services on the people who use them and on others – like carers – who are closely involved.

SWIA Inspector Martha Shortreed and other inspectors and HR staff are involved in the development of training for carers who will become members of the inspection teams. Martha told *Inspection Matters*: "We have just run our second two-day training session for Carer Inspectors in partnership with Carers Scotland and the faculty of community and care at Glasgow College of Nautical Studies.

“The contribution that Carer Inspectors make to our inspections is invaluable, sharing as they do their first-hand experience of services as carers.”

SWIA, in partnership with Carers Scotland, has been fortunate in recruiting Carer Inspectors for the whole programme of performance inspections. Anne Conlin, Training and Development Manager for Carers Scotland, explained that members of her organisation’s own committee had been the first to respond to SWIA’s request for Carer Inspectors and have continued to be involved in the inspection programmes. “Since then, the wider network of national carer organisations has been involved in recruiting for the role,” she said. “The network brings

together Shared Care Scotland, Crossroads Scotland, Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Coalition of Carers, Young Carers Alliance and ourselves. It has meant that some twenty carers altogether have come forward to join SWIA inspections.”

Under tutor Louise Gaddi, Glasgow College of Nautical Studies has now provided four days of training for two groups of Carer Inspectors. Feedback has been very positive. Carers believe they will be better equipped to make the most of their role on the inspection team, as they grasp the opportunity it presents to influence social work services. And when one carer was asked “What would you take from involvement in an inspection?” she replied: “Pride”.

Shared Care Scotland Conference

SWIA will be represented by Martha Shortreed and Carer Inspector Brenda Emmerson, a member of Carers Scotland’s committee, at Shared Care Scotland’s national conference, “Better breaks for all”, to be held in Dunfermline on 23 April 2009. Martha and Brenda will be running a workshop on the role of inspection and regulation with colleagues from the Care Commission.

The event is an opportunity for delegates to get up to date with recent developments, such as the revised Government guidance on service planning, aimed at improving the range and quality of breaks from caring.

Don Williamson, Chief Executive of Shared Care Scotland, commented: “We’re delighted that SWIA is contributing to our event. SWIA plays a vital role in supporting local authorities and their partners to

deliver services which produce the best outcomes for carers and the people they care for. This includes of course those essential services which provide carers with a much needed break from their caring responsibilities.

“As well as covering new developments, the conference will also let delegates share examples of good practice, exchange news and views, and consider the role we all play in delivering better breaks for all.”

Speakers will include Christine Lenehan OBE, Director of the Council for Disabled Children, and Mike Stevenson, business and social entrepreneur and founder of “Thinktastic”. Further information at: www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATION ROLE FOR ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

In its response to the publication of the Crerar report, the Scottish Government stated its aim of establishing a simplified and coherent approach to delivering local government scrutiny. Early last year, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth invited the Accounts Commission to take on a transitional gate-keeping and co-ordination role to take forward joint improvement work with all the bodies involved in the scrutiny of local government.

For this purpose, the Accounts Commission has set up a local government scrutiny co-ordination strategic group to set improvement priorities and oversee development activity. An operational group is undertaking the detailed development work.

Membership of these groups includes representatives from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), the Care Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS). Depute Chief Social Work Inspector David Cumming represents SWIA on the group.

The key priorities in this work are as follows.

- **Development of a shared risk assessment (SRA) process.** This involves all local government scrutiny bodies and aims to improve information

sharing and ensure that scrutiny activity is proportionate, in terms of its frequency, intensity and scope, and is based on risk.

- **Development of a single corporate assessment,** using the Best Value BV2 programme as the vehicle. This aims to minimise the potential for overlap and duplication in the scrutiny of councils' corporate functions.
- **Improved scheduling and co-ordination arrangements,** which aim to deliver more co-ordinated local scrutiny planning for councils and provide opportunities for scrutiny bodies to carry out their work in new ways.

Scrutiny information online

Web pages for "Improvement and Scrutiny" are now online at the Scottish Government website, at this address:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Scrutiny>

The web pages feature the background to the new improvement and scrutiny bodies for social work and social care and for health, a "who's who" for the groups taking the work forward, a diary of forthcoming events and a newsletter covering latest developments.

SWIA Notes ...

Speaking recently ...

Alexis Jay, Chief Social Work Inspector, was a keynote speaker at the one-day Holyrood Conference held in Edinburgh on 27 March. The high-level conference, which was addressed by Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years, took as its focus "**The Future for Child Protection in Scotland: examining the role of social services**". Alexis's theme was "Regaining vision and purpose: the need for change from within".

Gill Ottley, Depute Chief Social Work Inspector, faced challenging questions on **the changing face of social work in Scotland**, when she spoke at a conference in North Berwick on 2 April. Gill was speaking at the invitation of Dr Sue Ross, Chief Social Work Officer in East Lothian Council. The conference, entitled "It Matters", had been arranged to give social workers the opportunity to raise questions about where the profession is heading over the coming years, and if people who use services

and their families are getting what they really need from the profession.

David Cumming, Depute Chief Social Work Inspector, has contributed to a number of conferences recently, including two in November and March on the relationship to scrutiny of outcomes, both organised by the **Joint Improvement Team**, part of the Scottish Government Health Directorates. Also in March, David spoke at a conference for carers, service users and social work students organised in Glasgow by the Scottish Social Services Network, and at a Holyrood workshop on the future scrutiny landscape after 2011, along with ADSW, the Care Commission and Scottish Care.

Alexis Jay and colleagues in the **European Social Network (ESN)** recently met with Stéphane Ouaki, deputy head of cabinet to Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The meeting was an opportunity to bring the concerns and challenges facing local authority social work services to the European Commission at the political level and to discuss where EU activities overlap or are helping member state governments to tackle those challenges.

The ESN helps to bridge the gap between the local level and the European level on key social challenges.



Pictured from left to right: Lars-Göran Jansson, ESN Chair (Swedish Association of Social Directors); John Halloran, ESN Director; Alexis Jay; Pascal Gouffier, President of the French National Association of Directors of Social Care and Health of the Départements; and Christian Fillet, ESN Treasurer (Association of Flemish Directors of Social Services).

Involving councils in our new methodology

We have had a good response from local authorities wanting to be involved in shaping SWIA's new methodology, as we move to a more proportionate system of inspections. In the next issue of *Inspection Matters*, we hope to report on progress following the initial meetings in April/May.

SWIA Inspections 2008-2009

Performance inspection	Inspection dates	Publication dates
West Dunbartonshire	June 2008 – December 2008	April 2009
East Ayrshire	July 2008 – January 2009	June 2009
Stirling	August 2008 – February 2009	June 2009
Renfrewshire	September 2008 – March 2009	August 2009
South Ayrshire	October 2008 – April 2009	September 2009

NEWS ON INSPECTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Recent publications

Highland Performance Inspection Follow-up Report (January)

Performance Inspection of North Lanarkshire Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary (February)

Orkney Islands Performance Inspection Follow-up Report (February)

Performance Inspection of Scottish Borders Council Social Work Services – Report and Summary (February)

Glasgow City Performance Inspection Follow-up Report (March)

SWIA's report of the **inspection into the management of high-risk offenders** is at an advanced stage of its production. A representative group, including members of ADSW and the Scottish Government, is currently commenting on the report for factual accuracy, with a view to publication in the summer.

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

Web: www.swia.gov.uk

Register for regular email updates on www.swia.gov.uk

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