

## HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS REPORT IS PUBLISHED

SWIA collaborated with Her Majesty's inspectorates of constabulary and prisons to carry out an inspection into the management of high-risk offenders, and published the report in June. This major review provides a national picture of current strengths and weaknesses and points the way forward for future development of this key area.

The inspection involved detailed case reviews of some 60 offenders across 17 local authorities and a review of risk management in five selected prisons. Key themes of high-risk offender management were explored in three local authority areas, with focus groups and individual interviews. A national consultation event brought together over 150 representatives from police, social work and other agencies.

The report acknowledges the good work that has already been done and sets out what can be done to achieve further improvements. It identifies where practice and procedures to minimise and manage risk can become better.

Inspectors found considerable variations in how police, social work and prisons managed serious sex offenders and serious violent offenders. Social work and police often held separate management and supervision plans. There were significant problems in how and when agencies used risk assessment tools and a serious deficit in assessing the risk of harm that offenders posed to the public.

The inspection found that practitioners were very committed to public protection. They recognised the importance of their role and of working together to protect the public, especially in the management of sex offenders. In prisons, the Integrated Case Management system had brought extra clarity and purpose to the

efforts of the many agencies involved in rehabilitating offenders during their custodial term and planning for their release back into the community.

Chief Social Work Inspector, Alexis Jay said that, even when services worked well together to assess and manage risk, they might not be able to entirely eliminate it, and it was possible for determined offenders to commit serious offences. "Nevertheless", she said, "it is important that agencies do everything they can to reduce the risk of harm to the public."

The report identifies challenges for the Scottish Government and local authorities, health services, police and the Scottish Prison Service. Responding to the call for action, the Justice Secretary, Kenny MacAskill, said: "Public protection is a continuous process and the inspectors have outlined where we and our criminal justice partners can further strengthen processes. Much collaborative work is now in place to support improved, consistent standards across the country for supervising high-risk offenders, including robust testing of new methods of risk of harm assessment, and for further safeguarding communities."

- Copies of the report, *Assessing and managing offenders who present a high risk of serious harm, 2009*, are available at [www.swia.gov.uk](http://www.swia.gov.uk).

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# Consultation events will help shape the way inspection develops

SWIA's plans to move to a more proportionate and targeted method of inspecting social work services continue to progress. We have been holding a series of consultation events to make sure that we listen to and take into account the views of the organisations and individuals most closely affected by developments.

## Involving the local authorities

Back in February this year, Chief Inspector 'Alexis Jay' wrote to all 32 councils in Scotland, asking for volunteers to take part in a consultation process, designed to test a number of key aspects of SWIA's revised methodology.

In total, eleven local authorities sent representatives to a series of 2 consultation events. The first all-day event, held in Edinburgh in April, examined the concept of an initial scrutiny level assessment (ISLA). This is the process by which inspectors consider risk, need for improvement, current and planned self-evaluation activity in the local authority and the work of other scrutiny bodies. They would take this to form a judgement on what level of scrutiny activity is likely to be required.

The second event, held the following month in Glasgow, focussed more on how scrutiny would be delivered, and how this would fit in with local authority self-evaluation. The meeting also looked at reporting and the way in which SWIA inspection activity will form a constituent part of the shared risk assessment (SRA). The development of SRA is currently being co-ordinated by Audit Scotland.

Marc Hendrikson, Acting Depute Chief Inspector, said that there had been a general welcome from the representatives of the 11 local authorities for the more proportionate risk-based approach that SWIA is advocating. "They welcomed the intention to significantly reduce the level of external scrutiny across the board", he said. "At the same time, however, it was recognised that for a very small number of local authorities, the risks and

improvement needs identified might require continued, significant levels of scrutiny on the part of SWIA inspectors."

One of the authorities represented at the events was **Glasgow City Council**, which had previously been involved in piloting SWIA's self-evaluation tool. The council's Practice Audit Manager, Rosemary Etherson, told *Inspection Matters*: "Having been part of that initial test, it was a great opportunity to attend these two events and take our involvement to the next stage in the wider group.

"Not only was it an opportunity to contribute, but it also helped me to gain a better understanding of the roles of local authorities and SWIA within the new arrangements. My view was that, for all the council representatives attending, it was a very worthwhile exercise to be involved at this stage of the development. Everyone had brought ideas on how it should be shaped, and SWIA took these on board."

**South Lanarkshire Council** was also represented at the consultation events. Social Work Performance Manager, Michelle McConnachie, found it 'extremely useful' to be able to share experiences and also to reflect on previous inspection work. "It was good to be able to discuss proportionate inspection with SWIA", she said. "Although the methodology is at an advanced stage of development, we recognised that SWIA were taking the local authorities' views into account in refining aspects of it.

"It was heartening to hear how SWIA will continue to challenge, support and encourage promotion of a self-evaluation culture within social services. Within South Lanarkshire we have been focussing on the area in SWIA's self-evaluation guide that deals with key processes for service delivery. Performance inspections have shown this to be the area where local authorities are most questioned and inevitably there will be a relationship between efficient and effective processes and outcomes for people using social work services."

## Consulting the people who use social work services

The two one-day consultation events organised by SWIA for carers and people who use services have met with a very positive response.

The people who attended the sessions held in Perth and Glasgow in early June are among those who will be most affected by future changes to scrutiny of services. They want to make sure that services will continue to improve, and seized this opportunity to make their views known.

'Changes to the way we work' was the title of the presentation made at both events by SWIA Inspectors, Linda Connolly and Martha Shortreed, assisted by team members Marion Hughes (Inspection Support Manager) and Andrew Drever (Administrator). Each one-day event was structured to allow a session for carers in the morning, followed by an afternoon session for people who use services. Both events attracted a wide cross-section of interests. Some carers' roles involved grown-up sons or daughters with physical or learning disabilities, others were caring for parents with dementia. Dementia groups were represented among the afternoon delegates, while others included men and women from the Richmond Fellowship Scotland and Enable Scotland.

Martha told *Inspection Matters*: "Both sessions went very well indeed, with constructive suggestions coming from all sides. These ideas are now being actively looked at by our Senior Management Team."

One young woman from Say Women, a voluntary organisation that offers safe accommodation to survivors of sexual abuse, told the afternoon session in Glasgow that she had been involved with social work all her life. It was, she said, the first time she had been asked to take part in something like this, where her views would be listened to. Speaking up for each person's involvement in their own service provision, one dementia group member urged "Nothing about me, without me."

Earlier in the day at the Glasgow event, one of the carers had answered a question put by the SWIA inspectors, 'What can we not afford to miss in our fieldwork visits?' The carer warned: "You can't afford to miss anything that is going wrong. That's it in a nutshell. Your time is going to be shorter ... you might miss things."

- The views expressed by everyone at the consultation sessions and in their later feedback are helping to develop the way SWIA will go forward with the new, more focussed scrutiny.



Taking up the opportunity for consultation, at the Glasgow session for people who use social work services.

# Taking an overview of social work services

A major project is now underway to provide an overview of how social work services are delivered in Scotland.

SWIA has set up a high-level publications group, chaired by Chief Social Work Inspector, Alexis Jay, to draw on the unique store of evidence and knowledge gained from our 2005-2009 inspection programme and to prepare an overview report for publication in early 2010. The focus is directed on how councils are delivering and improving social work services (both directly provided and commissioned) across community care, children and families, and criminal justice services.

The project will make use of the wide range of SWIA reports, taking evidence and information from the performance inspections in all 32 council areas and from the multi-agency and other special inspection reports relevant to community care and children and families. Evidence from follow-up inspection reports will help to track improvements where these have taken place. The overview report will also incorporate an update on the final report of SWIA's criminal justice social work performance inspection programme 2003-2007.

Specific areas for analysis will include social work services workforce matters, strategic commissioning and planning, performance management, and leadership. The overview will feature examples of good practice with national relevance that can be replicated elsewhere and help to bring about system change and service improvement. It will also look forward to the adoption by councils of self-evaluation and closer joint working with other agencies. Equality issues will be identified and threaded throughout the report.

Christina Naismith, the Social Work Inspector leading the publications work, told *Inspection Matters*: "We are really excited about this project, which should result in a most important overview document. We have this unique evidence base, including the views and experiences of people who use social work services and their carers, and of the staff who deliver

those services. They have all taken part in inspection surveys or meetings.

"We feel we have a lot to say that will be useful and that will contribute to the continuing improvement of social work services in Scotland."

The project steering group includes Catherine Rainey from the Scottish Government's Changing Lives Team and Neil Ballantyne from the Institute for Research and Innovation for Social Services. The resultant report will identify achievements and challenges, using evidence and information derived from inspections.

The project also involves the development of two practitioners' guides to be published later this year. A review of the evidence base, especially derived from SWIA's file reading, suggested that SWIA had useful information of direct relevance and interest to practitioners that could help in improving practice. It is planned that one guide will focus on chronologies, which draw on the knowledge and information held by all agencies involved with a person or child using services and his or her family or carers, giving a clear account of the significant events in the person's life. The other guide will cover the review and scrutiny of files. Development of the guides will involve practitioner forums around the country, an initiative of the 21st Century Social Work Review.

The practitioners' guides will be relevant to local authority social work services and more widely to practitioners working within the voluntary and private sectors. Similar guides on other topics may follow next year.

Christina said: "We are aiming the overview report mainly at local authorities and their strategic partners. However, we want it to be relevant too, to people who use services, their carers, and other organisations – community, voluntary or private – who also provide services.

"We want the overview report to be both readable and informative, but we're also planning to publish summaries for everyone with an interest."

# Discussing the sensitive and complex issues of deaths of looked after children

A recent report on the sensitive topic of deaths of looked after children was the subject of a seminar for local authority and health staff organised by SWIA at the end of May.

Local authorities are responsible for notifying Scottish Ministers when a looked after child dies. SWIA acts on behalf of Scottish Ministers in this, and works with HME and the Scottish Government Health Directorate to review care arrangements and assess actions taken by the local authority, identifying any lessons to be learned.

SWIA had reviewed the reports of all deaths of looked after children between March 2006 and March 2008. Among a number of findings, the review revealed that, of the 29 children who had died, most had had life-limiting illnesses, such as muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis and childhood cancers. The deaths of seven out of the 29 were attributed to suicide or acts classed as being of 'undetermined intent'.

The May seminar was designed to allow for discussion of the findings with senior managers. It was to give everyone the opportunity to consider the implications for the care of children with life-limiting conditions and the care and management of children and young people who intentionally self-harm. The review had shown that local authorities had cared effectively for many looked after children. There were, however, areas needing development to further improve care.

SWIA Inspector, Chris Robinson explained: "We opted for a seminar rather than a larger conference for this sensitive subject. With just over forty people there, it was an opportunity for real dialogue and discussion. We are following it up with the formal publication of the report, along with material from the seminar and our action plan. This means that councils who couldn't be represented there won't miss out on the important issues."

Presentations by Dr Pat Carragher, Medical Director of Children's Hospice Association Scotland (CHAS) on palliative care, and by Dougie Patterson and Greig Ferguson, both from NHS Health Scotland's Choose Life programme for suicide prevention, raised many thought-provoking issues.

Though coming from different areas of care, the speakers from CHAS and Choose Life delivered the same message: "Remember, there are other resources and support out there." Greig Ferguson, Training Co-ordinator for Choose Life, spoke about the training available for staff. He emphasised that it was not necessary to bring in 'yet another expert' to work with young people liable to self-harm. Through training, staff members themselves could gain the necessary confidence to help the young people. This was particularly important for night staff and foster carers, since most of the children who had died as a result of intentional self-harm had done so between 11.30 pm and 3 am.

Dr Carragher suggested a life plan for each child with life-limiting conditions, to help ensure sensitive care. His suggestion that CHAS should be seen by staff as a resource in caring for the children was welcomed. A number of authorities have signed up to the CHAS mailing list so that they can find out about conferences, training and other resources.

SWIA will be highlighting the availability of support and resources from organisations such as CHAS and Choose Life. We will be working with Choose Life and others to prepare guidance for staff and foster carers on how to identify and help young people contemplating suicide or self-harm. We will also be working with local authorities on how we can improve reporting arrangements.

The complexity of parental rights was discussed, and this was one of a number of issues flagged for future debate.

# Strengthening international links

**SWIA continues to strengthen links with European colleagues, taking advantage of opportunities to exchange ideas and share good practice, and to influence the quality of social services in other EU countries.**

## Vienna visit

SWIA Inspector, Audrey Mistry has recently returned from a successful three-day home care study visit to Vienna.

Delegates from a number of EU countries, including Turkey, Bulgaria and Italy, came together in the Austrian capital for a fact-finding visit organised by HomeCare Europe and hosted by the Catholic charity, Caritas.

Audrey told *Inspection Matters*: “Our Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay, has a longstanding involvement with the long-term care of older people in the wider European context. When she was unable to go to Vienna, SWIA was invited to send another representative, and I was delighted to go.

“Getting together with delegates from other countries was a great opportunity to find out about the common challenges that we face and also the differences that distinguish us. I found it a great learning experience and a most worthwhile visit.”

The programme began with a presentation by Caritas on their services, followed by the first exchange of information about delegates’ own home care services. Next day featured visits to two very different care facilities – a large care home in Vienna and, away from the city, a smaller home offering integrated care.

“The integrated care model has home carers embedded in the staffing for the care home”, said Audrey. “This has benefits for both care staff and home staff, offering continuity of care. Both Orkney and Shetland have adopted a similar rural area model. It gives staff an anchorage, stopping them from being isolated in the community. If a person who has been receiving home care is subsequently admitted to the care home, staff have a real sense of ‘the whole person’ from their experience of supporting them in their home environment.”

Audrey was particularly interested in the progress made in developing home care services in Bulgaria and trying to get services off the ground in Turkey, with some of the same cultural and economic barriers.

One of the major challenges facing all of the countries represented, related to home care staffing. Audrey heard from Belgian colleagues about their targeting of young people for a career in home care. It is taught in high school and a combined programme of teaching and vocational training is offered to school leavers.

In the packed three-day programme, interspersed with presentations from delegates about home care services in their own countries, there were many opportunities for exchanging information. The social side was well catered for, too, with a highlight being the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra’s spectacular open-air concert in the grounds of Schönbrunn Palace.



Pictured with their Caritas host, Thomas Siegl, are the four UK delegates: (left to right) Jenni Hodgson, home care organiser from Argyll and Bute, SWIA's Audrey Mistry, Ann Ferguson from York, and Esther Karunwi from London. Other European delegates were amazed to learn that Argyll and Bute had as many as 26 inhabited islands within its area. Jenni's attendance was jointly sponsored by SWIA and the National Homecare Council.

## Seminar in Germany

When the University of Kassel asked SWIA to give a presentation about our work to a group of staff and students, Social Work Inspector, John Waterhouse, took up the invitation and made the journey to the city in central Germany in June.

On his return, John told *Inspection Matters*: "German social workers have very little experience of formal inspection of their work and the participants showed a keen interest in SWIA's performance improvement model and asked some searching questions about the approach and how well it worked in practice.

"The university has asked SWIA to give a further presentation later this year to an international seminar on service user participation, based on SWIA's involvement of service users and carers in the inspection process. The two organisations are discussing the possibility of a Master's degree student from Germany undertaking a practical placement with SWIA, with a particular emphasis on studying the links between inspection and quality assurance."

## Quality and performance in social services in Europe

The next issue of *Inspection Matters* will report on the European Social Network annual conference, held in Prague at the end of June. The conference theme was 'Quality and performance in social services in Europe – better outcomes for people' and Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay, gave a keynote speech. SWIA presented a workshop on integrated social care and health inspection for older people.

# SWIA Inspections 2008-2009

Performance inspection	Inspection dates	Publication dates
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

Performance Inspection of West Dunbartonshire Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary (April)

Performance Inspection of East Ayrshire Council's Social Work Services – Report and Summary (June)

Assessing and managing offenders who present a high risk of serious harm (multi-agency report, June)

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