

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 4 APRIL 2007

SUBJECT: SOCIAL WORK INSPECTION AGENCY (SWIA): PERFORMANCE INSPECTION OF THE SOCIAL WORK SERVICE 2007

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee on the role and functions of the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) and provide a briefing on the Performance Inspection of the Social Work Service currently underway.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section G (10) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising the functions of the Council as a Social Work Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- (i) **note the details of the briefing on the Performance Inspection of the Social Work Service**
- (ii) **note the measures put in place by the Director of Community Services to assist with the Performance Inspection process**
- (iii) **agree that the Director of Community Services submit a report to a future Committee on the outcome of the Inspection and any associated Action Plan for this Service.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) was established as an Executive Agency in 2004 and is designed to operate independently and impartially. It is directly accountable to Scottish Ministers and replaces the Social Work Services Inspectorate (SWSI), which was formerly part of the Scottish Executive.
- 3.2 SWIA will inspect all local authority social work services in Scotland and report to the public and to Parliament on the quality of these services, locally and nationally.

- 3.3 The new body aims to work in partnership with the agencies that provide the services and the people who use them, to promote excellent social work services and generate improvement in standards, quality and positive outcomes for service users. The self-assessment techniques adopted by SWIA at the core of its inspection methodology are an extension of the departmental approach to performance improvement.
- 3.4 SWIA will undertake performance inspections of all the local authorities' social work functions every three years and Moray Council is the seventeenth local authority to undergo a Performance Inspection. Each inspection focuses on the approach to continuous improvement of the local authority and culminates in a published report which sets out the key evidence gathered during the inspection and identifies strengths and good practice as well as areas for development. In response to the report, the local authority will produce and agree with SWIA an action plan setting out how it will make any changes that are needed and a programme for monitoring how this plan is put into effect.
- 3.5 Inspection teams are drawn from a pool of SWIA inspectors, associate inspectors and lay inspectors. SWIA will also look at reports relating to the Moray Council area from other regulatory bodies and inspectorates including the Care Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and Audit Scotland.
- 3.6 This is Moray Council's third inspection in a twelve month period. Criminal Justice Social Work Services and Drug and Alcohol Services were both subject to inspection during 2006. The Performance Inspection of Social Work Services, which will take approximately six months, will focus primarily on Children & Families Social Work and Community Care Services. There will be a multi-agency Child Protection Inspection in 2008 when a round of SWIA inspections on integrated working will also commence.
- 3.7 An initial meeting with SWIA staff recently took place to confirm dates and aspects of the inspection process. The inspection is undertaken in three main phases: the pre-fieldwork phase, the fieldwork phase and the post-fieldwork. The first phase began mid-March and will principally involve a self-evaluation questionnaire; information gathering through documentation and surveys. The fieldwork phase lasts two weeks and will take place in June and will involve an analysis of one hundred case files, observation of practice and interviews and meetings with a range of people including elected members, management and staff, people who use services and carers and representatives from our partner organisations. The final phase will continue on from that and will culminate in a report. Given the indicative timescales, we should reasonably expect to receive initial Headline feedback mid-July with the first draft report of the Inspection late August. **APPENDIX 1** outlines the provisional timescale for the inspection process.
- 3.8 The report address six key questions:
- What key outcomes have we achieved?

- What impact have we had on people who use our services and other stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of key processes?
- How good is our operational management?
- How good is our strategic leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

3.9 It is important to recognise that the inspection process will involve everyone and such people will need to have a clear understanding of the process and their role within it. Advance planning is therefore key and a series of measures have been put in place including:

- (i) Staff briefings and workshops
- (ii) The Establishment of an Inspection Steering Group to co-ordinate the collation and further development of information/data required by SWIA;
- (iii) The recruitment of a Performance Inspection Co-Ordinator to assist with the ongoing co-ordination of activity during the inspection process.

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

The focus of the SWIA Inspection will be on policy and practice which are central to the principles set out in these key documents and in preparation with the commitment to foster and encourage a culture of continuous improvement.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy and legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

Supporting the Inspection process has significant resource implications in terms of staff time. This is being in part addressed by the Performance Inspection Co-ordinator resource, but will be a recurrent issue for the Department for the foreseeable future.

(d) Consultations

This report has been circulated to CMT and Senior Managers within Community Services.

5. **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 **Members are asked to note the briefing on the Social Work Performance Inspection, note the measures put in place by the Director of Community Services to assist with the process and agree to future reports from the Director of Community Services on the outcome of the Inspection and follow up action required.**

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Background Papers: Held by Authors
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