

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 13
FEBRUARY 2008**

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL WORK INSPECTION AGENCY (SWIA) REPORT ON
PERFORMANCE INSPECTION OF THE MORAY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 This report advises Committee on the outcome of Moray Council's first comprehensive inspection of Social Work Services. The report also advises Committee on the background to the inspection and outlines the process for taking matters forward post-inspection. Members were given their own personal copies of both the full and summary versions of the inspection report on the day that the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) published the document (14 December 2007).

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (23) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the exercising of the function of the Council as a Social Work Authority under Social Work Scotland Act 1968.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- (i) consider the outcome of the Performance Inspection of Social Work Services in Moray;**
- (ii) consider the draft Action Plan, which has been endorsed in principle by SWIA, to address policy and practice issues requiring improvement; and**
- (iii) note that the Director of Community Services will submit reports to Education & Social Work Services Committee and Audit & Performance Committee, as required, on progress outlined in relation to the Action Plan.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The inspection of Moray Council's Social Work Services took place between March and June 2007. Although very specific parts of social work have been inspected over the past 18 months, (Criminal Justice and Drug & Alcohol Services), this is the first comprehensive and detailed inspection of Social Work involving the Moray Council and its partners.

3.2 The inspection team consisted of SWIA inspectors, sessional inspectors, associate inspectors, and a carer inspector. The 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 the published report which sets out the key evidence gathered during the inspection and identifies strengths and good practice as well as areas for development.

4. THE FOCUS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 The Inspection has focussed on 6 key questions which make up SWIA's evaluation framework. These are:-

- What key outcomes are achieved?
- What impact is there on people who use the service and other key stakeholders?
- How good is the delivery of key processes?
- How good is the operational management?
- How good is the leadership?
- What is the capacity for improvement?

4.2 SWIA uses the same six point scale as other inspectorates in assessing performance with the grades of excellent; very good; good; adequate; weak and unsatisfactory. The table below shows the grades awarded for the 10 areas of evaluation.

Area for evaluation	Rating
1. Outcomes for people who use services	Adequate
2. Impact on people who use services and other stakeholders	Good
3. Impact on staff	Good
4. Impact on the community	Good
5. Delivery of key processes	Weak
6. Policy and service development, planning and performance Management	Adequate
7. Management and support of staff	Adequate
8. Resources and capacity building	Adequate
9. Leadership	Adequate

10. Capacity for improvement

Good

5. **OUTLINE OF FINDINGS**

5.1 The inspection highlighted a number of positive features in terms of practice and service development. These include:-

- 86% of service users found it easy to obtain clear information about the range of services, 92% received a good response on first contact, 77% had been given a clear plan to describe services they would receive, 82% felt there were a good range of services available and 88% felt they had received help when they needed it.
- 83% of service users felt services had helped them to feel safer and 81% felt services had helped them to lead a more independent life.
- SWIA felt, at both Council and departmental levels, considerable effort had been given to developing performance reporting and performance management. It was also acknowledged that at senior management level, decisive actions had been taken over the past two years to address operational and capacity issues.
- 90% of staff stated that they enjoyed their job.
- The Youth Justice Service's intervention has reduced offending behaviour in 87% of high risk offenders who completed their programme.
- Young Carers talked positively about the Young Carers project, run by the Princess Royal Carers Trust and funded by the Council.
- The Telecare developments were viewed as an example of good practice.
- There was positive recognition given to the home care service with regard to its integrated recruitment and induction process.

5.2 The Service was seen as under performing in a number of areas these include:-

- Only 26% of carers who responded to questionnaires felt that the help they received met all of their needs; 31% felt they met some of their needs, 19% felt they met few of their needs and 24% felt services met none of their needs.
- Community Services and Educational Services should take action to improve the educational outcomes for looked after children & young people.

- Data collection processes require to be strengthened to ensure accurate information is gathered on outcomes for people who use services.
- Some shortcomings exist in the level of recording in the assessment and management of risk to service users
- There should be a review of how the Council and the MCHSCP communicates with staff in Community Care Services, as many felt that they are not kept up to date or consulted on policy and service developments.
- There is a need to review the health and safety, procedural and management arrangements of Social Work's Out of Hours Service.
- Carers' assessments are not offered on a consistent and routine basis.
- Community Services' lack of an updated strategic plan for services for older people is seen as a significant gap.

5.3 SWIA acknowledged a number of positive developments that, at the time of the inspection, were seen as encouraging, but too recent to show evidence of impact. These include:-

- Comments that our structured approach to outcome measurement is encouraging but newly introduced and not yet widely applied.
- Examples given of services having been reviewed and procedures changed to produce better use of resources – these were recently introduced and only beginning to impact at the time of inspection.
- It was acknowledged that the inspection took place shortly into the life of a new Council and although early days, there were encouraging signs that the new Administration was working well.
- Inspectors were encouraged that weaknesses in our contracting and commissioning arrangements were being identified by the Review currently nearing completion. However, SWIA have recommended that sufficient resources should be made available to progress this post-Review to ensure arrangements are fit for purpose.
- The recent appointment of a training manager, the establishment of a Business Support Unit, the strengthening of the planning function in Community Care and the establishment of the post of Policy Officer (Performance & Modernisation) are viewed as positive developments to refocus and strengthen Community Services' structure.

5.4 A number of specific initiatives have been taken forward by Community Services in the nine months leading up to the SWIA Inspection. Our

limited resources were targeted to progress developments identified by staff as necessary to strengthen policy and service delivery. Specifically, Community Services have, for example:-

- Developed a Service Improvement Plan with links to the Council's Corporate Plan and Community Plan;
- Revised Performance Frameworks in both Community Care and Children & Families and established robust monitoring systems;
- Developed a Workforce Development Strategy and an annual training plan;
- Established a Social Work Training Executive to ensure a more strategic approach to training and staff development across divisions;
- Developed a policy on challenging behaviour;
- Issued case recording and staff supervision policies;
- Launched a Social Work Practitioners' Forum in line with the expectations of Changing Lives;
- Developed a Health & Safety Policy;
- Drafted a new Carers' Strategy and issued this for consultation;
- Developed Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedures and sought approval to establish a Shadow Adult Protection Committee;
- Revised departmental risk registers (with operational risk registers under review);
- Incorporated the Realtime Evaluation of Social Work Practice into the Department's Performance Framework.

6. **PROGRESSING THE FINDINGS**

- 6.1 SWIA's report makes 16 recommendations and also refers to a number of issues that, although not specified as recommendations, will be or have been addressed as a part of an overall package of improvements.
- 6.2 All the recommendations are accepted and the Community Services' Management Team have been working on a draft Action Plan detailing the actions which will be taken, by whom and by when, to secure improvement in identified areas (attached as **APPENDIX 1**). SWIA have commented positively on Moray Council being able to develop this so quickly following the completion of the inspection. They have however asked for more time to consider the detail of the Action Plan but have intimated that apart from some potential minor changes to the content, they are happy at this stage to endorse it in principle.

7. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The continuous improvement of social work services by responding to external inspection is in accordance with the Council's commitment set

out in the Corporate Development Plan to meet the requirements of external regulation and the inspection of services. Furthermore, the development and delivery of good quality social work provision is crucial to the aspirations of Moray's Community Plan particularly in relation to the themes of Achieving a Healthy and Caring Community and Investing in Children and Young People.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications. Although there are no immediate policy implications arising from this report, the on-going work outlined in the Action Plan may result in revised or new policies being presented at future Committees.

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

The measures identified within the Action Plan will be progressed within current financial resources.

(d) Consultations

Katrina McGillivray, Senior Personnel Adviser, Lorraine Paisey, Principal Accountant, Karen Wiles, Principal Solicitor, Sally Chisholm, Head of Community Care and John Carney, head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its contents.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report provides a summary of the findings contained within the Performance Inspection of Social Work Services report, which was published on 14 December 2007.**
- 8.2 A draft Action Plan is attached which provides Members with an outline of how resources and activity will be focussed to progress improvement.**

Author of Report: Sandy Riddell
Background Papers: None.
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