

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 27 JUNE 2008

PERFORMANCE INSPECTION OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Governance and Scrutiny committee of a programme of preparations for the forthcoming Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) Performance Inspection of East Ayrshire Council Social Work Service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 SWIA carries out Performance Inspections of all Scotland's local authority social work services. Inspectors gather and analyse a wide selection of information about a local authority and the social work services it provides or is responsible for. The inspection results in a published report that identifies strengths as well as areas for improvement. To date, SWIA has reported on 13 council inspections.
- 2.2 In common with other national inspection agencies, SWIA monitors the implementation of the recommendations made in the report and undertakes a short follow up inspection one year after the publication of the report. In order to do this an action planning phase is included in the core inspection activities.

3. OVERVIEW OF INSPECTION PROCESS

- 3.1 The inspection looks at the context in which social work services are delivered within the local authority area including an area profile and the organisation of social work services. The inspection process itself consists of a series of activities:
- A self evaluation questionnaire;
 - Analysis of advance information;
 - Surveys;
 - File reading; and
 - Observations of practice.
- 3.2 The inspection is conducted using the SWIA Performance Inspection Model (PIM). The model consists of numerous quality indicators which make up ten areas for the overall evaluation. These areas equate to those used by other external evaluators such as HMIE:
- Key outcomes;
 - Impact on adults, carers, children and families who use service;
 - Impact on staff;
 - Impact on the community;

- Delivery of key processes;
- Planning and service development, planning and performance management;
- Management and support of staff;
- Resources and capacity building;
- Strategic leadership;
- Capacity for improvement.

3.3 These ten areas for evaluation underpin six key questions of the authority and these form the basis of the final inspection report:

- 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?

3.4 SWIA uses a 6 point scale in its inspection of local authority social work services against which each of these questions will be assessed:

Level	Definition	Description
Level 6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding
Level 5	Very Good	Major strengths
Level 4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Level 3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2	Weak	Important weaknesses
Level 1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

4. PREPARING FOR INSPECTION

4.1 The objective in preparing for the Performance Inspection of Social Work Services in East Ayrshire is to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to effectively respond to and manage the inspection process. The inspection will formally commence from 30 June 2008. Therefore colleagues will be involved in the extensive preparation and collation of case files and background documents. The file reading phase starts in October, with interviews in late November. Elected members will be actively involved in this latter stage. A draft report will emerge in spring, with final publication in the summer of 2009.

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Nil

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The SWIA inspection process is labour intensive. Their own documentation suggests that a senior officer of the Authority should be employed full time in order to co-ordinate inspection activities. There is also an expectation that administrative staffing support will be provided. This is in addition to staff time during the inspection The estimated costs are therefore:

Senior officer time in direct support	£30,000
Administrative officer time	£10,000
Other officer time, preparations (estimate)	£10,000
6 X Council officer file readers for one week	£12,000
Other officer time during field phase (estimate)	£25,000
Admin, stationery etc	<u>£500</u>
TOTAL	£87,500

This resource will have to be found from existing staffing allocations, including those in educational services.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The inspection has implications for the Council's Community Planning Partners, particularly NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Strathclyde Police and the Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration

8 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The inspection process is likely to look at the Council's approach to areas of risk in service delivery. These will principally apply to areas where individuals are vulnerable or who in their own right display challenging behaviours. The general approach to staff welfare, including, for example, lone working will also be reviewed.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) agree this report as preparations for the SWIA performance inspection;
- (ii) note that this report has been considered by the Cabinet;
- (iii) note that this report will also be considered by Community Planning Partners;and
- (iv) otherwise note the content of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
01 June 2008

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. SWIA Inspection Reports on Other Councils, available from the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services.
2. SWIA Inspection Handbook, available from the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services.

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