

Performance Inspection Summary

City of Edinburgh Council

What is a performance inspection?

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) is carrying out performance inspections of all local authority social work services in Scotland.

SWIA gathers and analyses a wide selection of information about a local authority and the social work services it provides or is responsible for. The inspection findings are published in a report that identifies strengths as well as areas for improvement.

This leaflet summarises some key findings of the inspection of the City of Edinburgh Council's social work services, which are set out in the full report published in April 2008.

The City of Edinburgh Council will produce an action plan in response to the inspection report. The plan will set out how any necessary changes are to be made. Once the plan is agreed, SWIA and the council will monitor the implementation of the plan together.

If you would like a copy of the full report, or would like to know more about SWIA, please contact:

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Inspection findings

Most people who received services in Edinburgh agreed they were of good quality, and they were treated with dignity and respect. Edinburgh social work services worked well with the communities they served, and the involvement of older people in planning services for older people was particularly positive. Staff were committed and motivated and social work services performed well in attracting and supporting staff, and encouraging staff to develop their professional skills.

Edinburgh was making progress to improve services for people with a learning disability, people with mental health problems, vulnerable children, and those needing home care.

There was a growing culture of quality assurance in social work services, which were striving to continuously improve their services. Recent changes in senior management, and in elected members responsible for social work services, coupled with support from the chief executive, gave cause for optimism that improvements could be taken forward.

There were significant challenges in relation to budget constraints and the re-design of some services.

We identified a number of key areas for improvement, including:

- low staff morale, though efforts were being made to improve this;
- delays in providing assessments and some people were waiting for a considerable time for services;
- care plans for people who used services and their carers were not always completed and regularly reviewed;

- the continued development of integrated services to ensure the delivery of good care to those who need the service; and
- the further modernisation of some services, especially those for people with a learning disability and those needing home care.

We noted that these issues were being addressed through integrated social work improvement plans.

Some examples of good services delivered by social work services and partner agencies

- **Accommodation for people with mental health problems** – Three council run residential supported accommodation services for people with mental health problems were awarded the Charter Mark in 2007. Areas of best practice included the quality of information provided to residents and potential residents, the use of technology including internet access for residents, demonstrating that the organisation listened to residents and actively involving residents in planning improvements for the services.
- **The involvement of older people in service planning** – ‘Live Well in Later Life’ (the joint capacity plan for older people), together with the ‘City for All Ages’ strategy, and the joint capacity planning for older people’s services, developed a broad base of representation from existing service users, carers and organisations, as well as active involvement from the public. It was particularly positive that the equalities group for older people were leading consultation processes with the wider community and there were strong links with the ethnic minorities group on accommodating the need for some culturally discrete services. Information on the progress of the strategy and service options were available in a variety of formats in public places. Social work services supported SAGE, the collective advocacy group for older people in care homes, to facilitate their involvement in planning a major development of care home provision in the city. Care home residents provided input to a training session for architects, contractors and construction staff involved in the building of the new care homes.

- **‘Moose in the Hoose’ Project** – This project was set up to enable older people in care homes to develop computer skills. Working with Age Concern the volunteer co-ordinator was able to link pairs of volunteers to care homes for weekly sessions. Residents had been able to develop internet contact with relatives living abroad and to seek out websites of particular personal interest.
- **Housing and social work services** – The involvement of housing staff in the throughcare and aftercare, the delayed discharge, and the youth justice teams was a good practice example of multi-disciplinary working between housing and social work services.
- **Respite services** – The short breaks and opportunities team for planned respite, holidays and day opportunities for people with learning disabilities and older people was found to be a good and innovative team. It had a professionally-produced DVD of the service presented by service users and carers which it used as a communication and recruitment tool. The team provided good quality and much-needed services, tailored to each individual’s needs.

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