

Performance Inspection Summary

East Dunbartonshire Council

August 2008

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 East Dunbartonshire Council's social work services, which are set out in the full report published in August 2008.

East Dunbartonshire 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

This inspection identified a number of strengths in the delivery of social work services in East Dunbartonshire. A number of planned improvements were underway at the time of the inspection and social work managers were developing outcome-focused performance management measures. We found good examples of quality assurance measures in child protection and in criminal justice services.

There was strong corporate and political support for social work, and partner agencies expressed positive regard and respect for social work managers and staff. We found good leadership of social work services, and good support for front-line leadership in both child care and community care.

Most service users were pleased with the quality of services they received. While social workers involved service users appropriately in decisions about planning or reviewing their own care, involvement of service users in planning and evaluating services was not well developed. Carers received better support to allow them to contribute to service planning.

Partners and stakeholders worked well together in child protection and youth justice, and good efforts were being made to identify and support children affected by parental substance misuse or mental health problems. There was evidence of increasing investment in multi-agency training to provide sound foundations for collaborative working.

Social work and partners in health had a major challenge to provide enough of the right support and services to meet the needs of its older people. We found that they had made belated but promising progress in joint planning and integrated care packages

and were working together on making access to services more straightforward for older people.

East Dunbartonshire had made considerable improvements in the recruitment and retention of staff. From a position of serious staff shortages three years ago, they have increased retention by investing in enhanced terms and conditions, generous training opportunities and annual events which brought staff together to plan service developments or improvements. We found staff to be highly motivated.

The social work service needed to make improvements in some areas. These included:

- service users waiting too long for some services
- providing enabling support for people with mental health problems, learning disability, physical disability or substance misuse problems, to lead a more independent life and pursue employment aspirations
- avoiding the need for duplicate assessments and overly-long assessments to access some services
- filling gaps in support and resources where attention and investment had been lacking – for young carers, care leavers, children affected by disability, adults with physical disability and those with sensory impairment.

Some examples of good services delivered by social work services and their partners

- The Intensive Support and Monitoring Service (ISMS) provided a multi-agency service to prevent admission to secure accommodation for young people who were involved in offending or risk taking behaviour. As well as some success in reduced use of secure provision, we found their approach to be person-centred and flexible.
- Older people with limited mobility had been recruited as volunteer telephone befrienders to support people who had other difficulties, reducing the isolation of both.
- A team manager in community care had introduced a Vision, Values and Standards framework for delivering services for older people. This had partnership and the continuing participation of older people at the heart of service delivery.
- The DeCafe project brought together people affected by dementia, their family or friends, and was also open to paid carers. Regular informal drop-ins were interspersed with professional or academic sessions on developments in dementia. There were also opportunities to hear about new treatments or try alternative therapies.
- There was good co-operation between home care staff and colleagues from substance misuse and health on coaching home carers on the most appropriate support for people experiencing particular problems or conditions.

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ISBN 978-1-905501-73-1

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Produced for the Social Work Inspection Agency by RR Donnelley B56545 08/08
Published by the Social Work Inspection Agency, August 2008