

Inspections: Services to Protect Children (HMle) and Social Work Services (SWIA)

The City of Edinburgh Council

21 December 2006

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of two major inspections of services to protect children and social work services during 2007.

2. Main report

2.1 The report titled 'External Audit and Inspections' on this agenda provides an overview of the demand on the Council from planned external audit and inspection over the period 2006-2008. The report contains brief details of two major inspections which will take place during 2007:

- The Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People (carried out by HMle, starting in February); and
- The Performance Inspection of Social Work Services carried out by the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), starting in October.

2.2 Both inspections provide a new rigorous assessment of the performance of services provided by Children and Families, Health and Social Care and agency partners including police, health and the voluntary sector. Both inspections will review the quality of the services provided to clients and the improved working practices that have put in place through Council Review 2007. The final public reports on the inspections will include recommendations for improvement.

2.3 HMle have statutory inspection powers across Local Authority and Health child protection services following new legislation in 2006. The HMle joint inspection of Services to Protect Children will commence on site in February 2007 and covers the services provided by Children and Families Department, Police, Health and the voluntary sector. The inspection will seek to establish:

- If there is robust strategic leadership and plans;
- If children and young people get the help they need when they need it;
- How effectively agencies and the community work together to keep children and young people safe?
- How good is the delivery of key processes?

- How good is the operational management in protecting children and young people and meeting their needs?
- 2.4 Preparation work, led by a multi-agency reference group and senior managers within Children and Families, is well advanced and a pre-inspection return to HMle was submitted to HMle earlier this month. Self-evaluations from both the Council and a multi-agency group will be submitted in February.
- 2.5 The inspection of Social Work Services is scheduled to commence in October 2007. Preparation work has already commenced in both Children and Families and Health and Social Care Departments and I recently established a Preparation Board to direct and review preparation work during 2007.
- 2.6 SWIA are carrying out performance inspections of all of Scotland's social work services during 2005 and 2008. The new approach to inspection introduced by SWIA requires considerable effort and resources. The purpose of the performance inspection is to:
- Provide an objective, evidence based assessment of how well people are being served by their social work services;
 - Make a constructive contribution towards the further improvement of services provided;
 - Help safeguard the interest of people, who use services, and carers; and
 - Work with local authorities to develop their own approach to improving services.
- 2.7 After analysing a wide selection of material about the council and its services, the inspection team will spend about two weeks in the city to carry out further assessment. A variety of methods will be used to judge how well people are served by social work services and how well the Council has organised itself to maintain and improve services including:
- Interviews with people who use services, carers and people responsible for arranging and delivering services;
 - Surveys of staff, services users and carers;
 - Analysis of case files; and
 - Meetings with a range of organisations and groups including elected members and visits to places where services are provided.

Conclusion

- 2.8 Both the HMle and the SWIA inspections will provide a rigorous test of the quality and performance of the Council's services to citizens who rely on the Council and its partners to provide support, help and protection when they need it. I am confident that a combination of good preparation and the work that has already been done to improve services will ensure the Council is in a strong position to build upon the positive results already achieved from recent HMle and Care Commission inspections.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council note the contents of this report.



Tom Aitchison
Chief Executive

12/12/06

Appendices	None
Contact/tel	Tom Aitchison, Chief Executive, 469-3002
Wards affected	None
Background Papers	Joint Board of Governance, 1 November 2006, HMle Joint Inspection of services to Protect Children and Young People.