

**REPORT**

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: SOCIAL WORK INSPECTION AGENCY PERFORMANCE INSPECTION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICES – REPORT ON THE LANARKSHIRES GROUPING CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 18 <sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006	Ref: JD/BC	

**1. Purpose of Report/Introduction**

To inform Committee of the Social Work Inspection Agency report, Performance Inspection of Criminal Justice Social Work Services, on the Lanarkshire Grouping Criminal Justice Social Work Services 2006, and to advise of the joint action plan currently being developed in respect of the report's, findings and recommendations.

**2. Background**

- 2.1. The Social Work Inspection Agency, (SWIA) is an Executive Agency, which is directly accountable to Scottish Ministers.
- 2.2. SWIA's task is to inspect all Social Work Services in Scotland and report publicly and to Parliament on the quality of these services, locally and nationally. SWIA can also be requested by Scottish Ministers to deliver other tasks including the carrying out of investigations into significant incidents or cases.
- 2.3. SWIA is currently undertaking a programme of inspection of Criminal Justice Social Work Services across Scotland.
- 2.4. The inspection of Criminal Justice Social Work Services in the Lanarkshire Grouping, was carried out during October and November 2005. This was the seventh Criminal Justice Social Work inspection in the SWIA national programme.
- 2.4. The Criminal Justice Social Work Services in Lanarkshire are managed separately by North and South Lanarkshire Councils. However each Council manages several specialist services which cover Lanarkshire as a whole. South Lanarkshire manages the court services and the Drug Treatment and Testing Order programme, while North Lanarkshire manage the Justice Throughcare Service.

**3. Considerations**

- 3.1 During the process of inspection practitioners and managers were interviewed, as were offenders and key stakeholders including Sheriffs, the Police, Housing and beneficiaries of Community Service.

### 3.2 The Services reviewed by SWIA were

- Social Enquiry Reports.
- Home Background Reports
- Supervising Arrangements.
- Management of High Risk Offenders.
- Community Service.
- The Organisation and Management arrangements of services.

### 3.3 The inspection observed examples of supervision and a small percentage of the work carried out by the Grouping

- In 2004-05 the Grouping completed 6,457 Court reports (North Lanarkshire – 3825). 156 court reports were evaluated from the grouping (North Lanarkshire Council – 93).
- In 2004-05 the Grouping completed 189 Home Background reports. 30 were evaluated from the grouping.
- In 2004-05 the Grouping assumed responsibility for 1,533 new probation and parole cases (North Lanarkshire Council – 1032). 134 cases were examined from the grouping.

### 3.4 The report recognised that managers in both authorities had already identified many of the issues, which arose in the inspection and were taking steps to address them.

### 3.5 Examples of excellent individual practice were found, although standards in some areas of work needed to be raised.

### 3.6. Some of the findings of the report include the following:

#### **Court Reports**

- 98.8% of North Lanarkshire's court reports were submitted on time.
- Two thirds of the sample from North Lanarkshire contained risk assessments.
- Sheriffs were broadly content with the quality of reports and felt they met their requirements in providing advice relevant to sentencing.

#### **Home Background Reports**

- The balance of practice was heavily weighted towards 'adequate'.
- Two thirds of reports contained a provisional release plan.
- The report recognised that some of the Home Background Reports were completed prior to the establishment of a Throughcare team and the findings may not reflect current practice.

#### **Supervision of Probation, Parole and Community Service**

- Over seven out of ten cases had initial action plans, which almost always spelled out steps to help offenders with problems related to their offending. Two thirds also spelled out steps to address offending.
- The level of supervision offered to offenders achieved acceptable or better standards in most cases.
- Compliance issues were handled well or very well in over half of the Probation and Throughcare cases, but Community Service was less positive.
- Performance in work with Sex Offenders was better than with other offenders in the sample.

3.7 The report made a number of recommendations which include the following:

- Risk assessments must be carried out more thoroughly and consistently.
- All cases should have a firm plan, wherever possible in the first six weeks of supervision.
- Supervision should seek to maintain clear focus on offending behaviour as well as offending-related needs.
- Procedures for supervising offenders released from prison must provide far greater continuity where cases are transferred from the specialist throughcare team to local area teams.
- Case recording standards must improve.
- Information about service performance must be routinely collected and used to plan and review services.
- The grouping should review it's guidance to clearly illustrate what managers expect in relation to assessment, management and supervision of high risk offenders.

3.8 The report acknowledged that the grouping had already identified a number of the areas for improvement noted in the report and were taking action to address them. The grouping is finalising an action plan to be submitted to SWIA by September 2006 and incorporated in the local plan.

3.9 The Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority, which was established on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006 will eventually monitor the implementation of the plan.

3.10 Core Justice Services are 100% funded by the Scottish Executive. The grouping was disappointed that SWIA made no reference in the report to a year on year increase in demand for services without an appropriate increase in funding. Both Councils make contributions to services from their core departmental budgets.

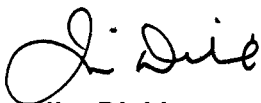
#### 4. **Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications**

4.1. Justice Services are 100% funded by the Executive. The future allocation of these monies across the grouping will be overseen by the Community Justice Authority. Funding levels will present significant challenges due to an increasing demand for services.

#### 5. **Recommendation**

5.1. Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the content of this report



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**25<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

*For further information on this report please contact Mary Fegan, Head of Social Work Services or Jim Scullion, Service Manager Justice on (tel 01698-332004).*

**A copy of the report is lodged in the members' library.**