

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Interim Executive Director of Social Work and Health

Social Work and Health Improvement Committee: 20 January 2010

Subject: Public Service Improvement Framework

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report is to inform members of a project undertaken by the Social Work and Health Department to work with the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) and the Improvement Service to pilot the use of the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) to undertake a self evaluation using the SWIA Performance Inspection Model (PIM) as guidance.

2. Background

- 2.1** The PSIF Partnership, supported by SWIA, hosted an event for PSIF lead officers and Social Work colleagues in March 2009, focusing on how to use PSIF to undertake a self evaluation of Social Work services. It was suggested that it would be helpful to test the mapping between PSIF and the SWIA PIM.
- 2.2** West Dunbartonshire, being already involved with SWIA in looking at their revised methodology and the transitional arrangements towards the introduction of the new scrutiny body in 2011, volunteered to take part along with North Ayrshire and the City of Edinburgh.
- 2.3** The aims of the pilot project include examining how well the PSIF and the SWIA PIM relate to each other, ascertaining whether the outputs of a PSIF assessment will meet the requirements of SWIA inspectors and will help drive improvement in service delivery and achieve service user outcomes for Social Work services, and whether the use of PSIF will reduce the burden of scrutiny.
- 2.4** In addition, as the Council has committed to the roll out of PSIF across all services as a catalyst for continuous improvement, we wished to gain first hand learning experience and to have the opportunity to influence the future use of PSIF with the SWIA PIM.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The SWIA PIM is the performance model against which SWIA judges Councils when undertaking a Social Work inspection. PSIF is a self evaluation performance framework which allows services to self-evaluate themselves against a set of performance standards.
- 3.2** Members will be aware that following the Crerar review of Inspection, Audit, etc in 2007 the Scottish Government agreed to review the ways in which

services were inspected and audited. Part of the future SWIA inspection process will be an increase in the weighting placed on supported self-evaluation. SWIA have started to roll-out this new inspection process based on the PIM.

- 3.3** As a number of Councils already use PSIF as their self-evaluation model a considerable amount of work has been done by the Improvement Service to map all elements of the PIM to the PSIF model. The purpose of this was to check the validity of services using either the PIM or PSIF models as a means of self-evaluation, thereby allowing Social Work services the choice as to whether they would use the PIM or PSIF as their basis for self-evaluation. This is helpful, as the Council has decided to utilise PSIF.
- 3.4** For the pilot of PSIF it was decided that it was appropriate to carry out the self assessment at departmental level at this stage (as the first stage in rolling-out PSIF to all areas of the department. One full day was set aside for the Departmental Management Team to undergo training, and a further one to one and a half days to work in small groups on the self assessment for the nine sections that make up the framework. A further two days were spent together to reach consensus and grade each element.
- 3.5** The process was facilitated by the Council's Manager for Quality who is a fully accredited PSIF facilitator, together with a facilitator from West Lothian for half a day. Our Lead SWIA inspector joined us for two half days during the consensus process.
- 3.6** Although a resource intensive process, it had the benefit of involving managers from every service who fully committed to the exercise and completed to the planned timetable. The level of involvement provided a unique opportunity to work together, and to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement, and was generally seen to be useful. Having our SWIA inspector present as a critical friend was helpful and confirmed that there was nothing, coming from the PSIF assessment and consensus processes, that was at odds with the recent inspection findings.
- 3.7** We are now engaged in drawing up and implementing an Improvement Plan, comparing this with our SWIA report, and using what we have learned to support the roll-out of service level PSIF self assessments across Social Work and Health.
- 3.8** We will be reporting back to the Improvement Service, along with the other two pilots and SWIA on our views and experience. The Improvement Service plan to publish feedback and launch any additional guidance materials through a learning event in 2010. SWIA will share the findings with the shared risk assessment team that has been established by the Accounts Commission.
- 3.9** The process itself produced a large range of improvement actions, some fairly minor in scale and ease of implementation, while others are more wide-ranging and which require a more structured approach to implementation.

- 3.10 The Improvement Plan runs to over 500 individual improvement actions, though some are duplicates, as at several areas of the process it is possible for the improvement action to be the same. For example “improved levels of consultation” was highlighted several times.
- 3.11 Attached as the Appendix to this report is a summary of the main areas where improvement was identified.
- 3.12 As noted at 3.4 above the full range of improvement actions which were identified will be compared to the areas and issues highlighted in the SWIA report (note this is not simply the 13 recommendations in the SWIA report – as the SWIA report had a range of other issues throughout).
- 3.13 Following this process a single Improvement Plan will be produced and input to Covalent for reporting and monitoring purposes.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 There are no personnel issues arising directly from this process, though the roll-out of PSIF across the department will involve significant employee input. This process and the implementation of any improvement actions arising from the process will involve taking employees away from their direct employment roles, however it is expected that over a number of years the process will benefit the department, and employees, as they become more involved directly with the improvement processes of the Council.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for this part of the work. However, rolling out PSIF across all our services will require to be resourced to facilitate the process. The resourcing of this will require to be found within existing resources.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 Issues raised in the improvement plan will require to be progressed. Whether we use the SWIA PIM or PSIF, lack of progress on key actions, or inability to sustain our current progress would result in a higher level of future scrutiny and would reflect badly on the Council. In addition to this the issues highlighted, once implemented will result in a higher standard of service being delivered to the people of West Dunbartonshire.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 7.1 Although we had recently completed a self evaluation and been inspected taking part in the pilot project has provided a useful insight and early chance to look at using the PSIF, now that the Council has decided to use it as a corporate framework, alongside the SWIA self evaluation guide.

7.2 The benefits of using PSIF as a self-assessment process to identify areas for improvement were seen at first-hand by the whole Social Work Departmental Management Team. This in itself will be beneficial as we move onto the roll-out as management will be able to lead this process in a more informed way due to their involvement.

7.3 Members are asked to:

- a) Note the start of the roll-out of the PSIF process within the Social Work and Health department;
- b) Note that the process involved our SWIA Link Inspector and that he was able to confirm that the processes were producing outputs similar to those identified through our SWIA processes (self-evaluation and inspection);
- c) Note the summary improvement areas appended to this report and instruct the Interim Executive Director to report back on the final outcome of the process with finalised action plan, together with details of the planned roll-out schedule for PSIF for each service area of the department to the next meeting of this Committee.

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Appendix: Summary of Improvement Areas identified by PSIF process

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All