

Scrutiny Report by Care Inspectorate**Report by Eibhlin McHugh Acting Director Communities and Wellbeing
and Don Ledingham Acting Director Education and Children's Services****1 Purpose of Report**

This report informs Cabinet of the outcome of the inspection of social work services recommendations undertaken by the Care Inspectorate in December 2011.

2 Background

- 2.1** The Care Inspectorate is a new scrutiny body which became operational in April 2011. Its approach to scrutiny involves carrying out an initial scrutiny level assessment (ISLA) to determine the key areas of risk. This was undertaken between June and November 2011 by examining case files; considering national performance data; and by an analysis of 300 documents –strategies, procedures etc- submitted by the Council.
- 2.2** The ISLA concluded that there were “no significant concerns” regarding management of staff; self-evaluation; partnership working; and equalities and human rights. They also concluded there were no areas requiring urgent attention or improvement.
- 2.3** The level of risk in relation to the four remaining areas was assessed as uncertain and as a result these were the focus of follow-up scrutiny in December. These areas were governance and financial management; outcomes for users and carers; assessment and care management; and risk assessment and risk management.
- 2.4** A team of inspectors spent a week in the Council meeting with groups of frontline staff, managers and partner agencies
- 2.5** As a result of this week-long scrutiny the Care Inspectorate produced their Scrutiny Report dated March 2012 which contained 4 formal recommendations:
 - 1.** The council should agree with its partners, on an interim and longer term basis, clear and appropriate processes for consistently monitoring and regularly reporting the use of funds in respect of all jointly funded services to the Community Health Partnership or equivalent.
 - 2.** The social work services should continue to improve the availability of valid outcome data, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to demonstrate how structural and operational changes to service delivery have impacted on performance

3. The social work services should, in consultation with staff, set clear targets and timescales to continue to improve the usability of, access to and reduce duplication in framework
4. Adults and Community Care services should be clearer and agree with its partners on the relevant aggregate data which should be collected and published on adult protection.

2.6 Following receipt of this report the Council was required to submit its proposed action plan to address these 4 recommendations (see Appendix 1). On 5th July the Care Inspectorate provided some brief comments on the Action Plan requesting the Council's response to these comments. The Care Inspectorate also indicated that it requires a progress report in November 2012.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

None of the recommendations made by the Care Inspectorate require the allocation of additional resources other than staff time.

3.2 Risk

The Care Inspectorate is the Government's Scrutiny Body responsible for evaluating the quality of care and protection offered by services for children and adults and those involved in the criminal justice system.

3.3 Policy

Strategy

The Care Inspectorate evaluates the effectiveness of Council services within the context of national strategies, policy objectives and standards.

Consultation

The Care Inspectorate consulted with 20 local focus groups in their scrutiny of local services.

Equalities

Three of the four recommendations relate to internal processes and as such do not have any direct impact on service users. The recommendation relating to improved outcomes will be addressed through a range of actions three of which have previously been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment. The remaining actions will be considered in relation to Equalities through an impact assessment on the roll-out of the *Talking Points* methodology (an approach which

seeks to elicit the views of service users as a regular component of the service's contact with them).

Sustainability

There are no environmental sustainability issues arising from the Care Inspectorate report. Sustaining improvements planned in response to the formal recommendations by the Care Inspectorate will be managed through inclusion in the relevant service and team plans.

3.4 IT Issues

There are no IT issues associated with this report at this stage.

4 Summary

The Care Inspectorate Report March 2012 was a largely positive affirmation of the progress made in recent years following the previous Inspection Report in 2008. The social work service provided through Communities and Wellbeing and Education and Children's Services seeks to operate within an ethos of continuous improvement. The recommendations made in relation to improving outcomes for users, and strengthening assessment and risk management arrangements reflect the desire of the service to ensure these are of the highest quality. The recommendation regarding monitoring of jointly provided services will be substantially addressed through the Government's recent announcement about the creation of Health and Care partnerships.

5 Recommendations

The committee are asked to:

- a) Note that the Care Inspectorate Report was received in March 2012 and is available in the Member's Library
- b) Note the action plan compiled to address the recommendations of this Report the progress of which will be monitored by the Divisional Management Teams in Communities and Wellbeing and Education and Children's Services

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Background Papers: None