



Improving Performance Management in Social Services

SWIA inspections have consistently identified two major weaknesses in Social Work Services: the lack of measurable outcomes and the inadequacy of existing performance management systems. Recognising these problems is one thing; dealing with them is a much more complex business, and this is where SOLACE Enterprises could help.

Two of our most experienced Associates, Glenys Johnston and Hester Ormiston have developed a new service designed to address these weaknesses and assist Social Work Services in establishing a performance management culture that delivers and evidences improved outcomes for service users. Both Associates have considerable senior management experience in Social Work, proven track records of effective consultancy work with councils and extensive inspection experience. Glenys has worked with ten Scottish Councils in delivering our Social Work PreInspection Health Check, and the new service has been successfully piloted with Fife Council Social Work Service.

What does this service give you?

Short term—identification of which elements of performance management are in place; recommendations for action to improve performance management.

Long term—Managers understanding and actively using performance management contributes to improving quality and value for money.

What can it cover?

Expert, constructive, straightforward advice and support on:

- Service and divisional plans — to ensure they link and encompass activity with priorities for improved performance
- The range of indicators of good performance, including formal PIs
- Mechanisms for setting, measuring and managing performance, including geographical comparisons
- Systems for monitoring and reporting performance at different levels throughout the council.

Our methods

Each programme is tailored to the individual council taking account of current effective systems and the local context.

We start with an in depth meeting to identify the overall performance systems in place within the service and each division. We review relevant data in advance, such as:

- Reporting data on assessment and care management
- Financial/activity links for services
- HR information
- Performance indicators
- Business planning
- Complaints procedures.

We hold a series of workshops with managers at different levels to demonstrate the purpose and processes of effective performance management and identify where data is held and how it can be reported. We also provide support for relevant key managers (with individual coaching where appropriate) to develop guidance for staff on the role and purpose of performance management and support the development of a performance file. We then prepare a diagnostic report outlining the strengths and opportunities for improvement, giving short term support to implement the proposals and to achieve informed engagement of managers and staff.

Our experience is that an initial assessment with associated work can be completed in 20 days, but this will vary from one council to another. By negotiation we can provide further support to the organisation, over an extended period, to ensure performance is fully embedded.

Our Associates

Glenys Johnston was a senior manager in childrens services; as a consultant she is a team leader for Audit Commission inspections, Commission for Social Care Inspection and Ofsted. Hester Ormiston was a senior manager in a large city and a county in England with management responsibility for the whole range of Social Service Department activities, including finance, HR and administration. She was an inspector in SSI for six years.

For further information please contact the Resource Centre. You can either phone on **0845 601 0649** or email resource.centre@solaceenterprises.com To find out more about SOLACE Enterprises and our full range of consultancy services see www.solaceenterprises.com

