corporate plan
2006–09

contents

introduction

Overview

In this document we present the corporate plan for the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) for the period 2006–09. The plan sets out SCIE's vision and strategic objectives for the years ahead and puts our work in the context of national policy developments in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This is SCIE's second corporate plan since we were established in late 2001. In our first years we focused on building a knowledge base and on establishing SCIE as a credible and knowledgeable authority on social care practice. We also focused on making links with partners in social care, higher education and health, in the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far. We have produced well-founded, trusted practice guidance and resources covering a wide range of social care issues, established our Partners' Council to help guide our work and developed a network of practice partners who test and update our materials. We have also launched Social Care Online, the UK's largest online database of social care resources.

We have learnt many lessons from our early years which will guide our work in the coming period and enable us to build on our early achievements. We will continue to work closely with a range of stakeholders to produce, identify and make available a range of resources, but we recognise that for knowledge to be embedded in policy and practice we need to devote more time and resources to promoting practice change. Social care agencies are increasingly aware of the importance of demonstrating that they are providing what is needed and wanted by service users – an outcomes-based approach – and SCIE will endeavour to conduct its work in the same way.

As well as creating and providing practice resources and helping to promote practice change, SCIE aims to influence the way things are done in the interests of service users and their carers. The corporate plan also outlines SCIE's values so that all our stakeholders are clear about the way we work. It demonstrates how we, together with those involved in practice, research and education, will seek to use these values to influence the social care sector and promote positive practice and policy.

Finally, this plan illustrates how the policy context has changed since SCIE's inception and how SCIE has responded to that. We believe we play an increasingly vital role as the link between children's and adults' services. We help to ensure that families and those in transition between children's and adults' services are not lost from view.

Allan Bowman
Chair

Bill Kilgallon
Chief Executive

About our corporate plan

SCIE's corporate plan provides the overall direction for our work over the next three years, a framework for staff to refer to and a set of clear objectives, for which we are accountable to our stakeholders for meeting.

The corporate plan demonstrates our commitment to:

- improving outcomes for service users and carers

- involving service users and carers in the work we do

- involving practitioners in the development of our resources

- raising the profile of social care and the social care workforce

- raising the volume and quality of social care research

- providing value-for-money to our funders.

Our corporate objectives for 2006–09 have been determined by our trustees, our staff and our stakeholders, looking at our achievements so far, lessons learnt from our early years and the future direction of social care.

Using the corporate plan as our basis, each year we also establish a business plan which details the specific activities we will undertake to meet our corporate objectives.

Please note, all blue underlined text in this document offers web links to further information.

about us

Our mission

As a charity, SCIE's mission is 'the relief of need arising from youth, illness, disability, old age or poverty'.[1]

Our 'beneficiaries' are the almost two million people of all ages in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who use social care services on a daily basis.

The way that we meet this objective is through 'the review, provision and dissemination of knowledge of, and guidelines for, good practice, and other information, to persons who use, work in or are otherwise involved in social care.'[2]

Our role

SCIE's role is to produce good practice guidance for the social care sector to improve services for the people who use them. While this may seem like a relatively simple task, it belies a complex and multi-faceted process that begins with deciding what information is good enough to base our evidence on and which ends with working with people to embed that guidance into practice. In a sector with as many as 40,000 employers, this is no small job.

To achieve this mission, we have divided our programme of work into the following key areas:

- **Adults' services.** This work area is about producing good practice guides that cover the spectrum of services to adults.

- **Children and families' services.** This work area is about producing good practice guides that cover the spectrum of services to children and families and about ensuring that families experience joined-up services.

- **E-learning.** This work area centres on the use of information and communication technologies, including the internet and World Wide Web, to improve and support teaching, training and learning.

[1,2] SCIE's *Memorandum and Articles of Association*, 2001.

- **People management.** This area of work is about good management practice and provides resources which can be used by employers throughout the section.

- **Knowledge management.** This programme of work focuses on improving the dissemination and availability of web-based knowledge and information for people working in and using social care.

- **Social work education.** This programme of work is about ensuring that tomorrow's social workers are highly skilled and prepared for the challenges they will face, through the development of resources for social work education programmes.

- **Stakeholder participation.** This is about making sure we are engaging the full range of social care's stakeholders in developing our work programme and our products. It is also about developing resources for good practice in the involvement of service users and carers.

- **Using knowledge to support social care.** This is about working out what information on which to base our good practice guidance, gathering and analysing that knowledge and on developing a nationally agreed agenda on what areas of social care need focused and sustained research interest.

We believe that through continuous and progressive work across these themes, we will contribute to the provision of excellent services for the people who use them.

Our uniqueness

SCIE is unique.

- We are a central source of authoritative and reliable knowledge for the whole of the social care sector – for social care practitioners, social work students and educators, social work academics and researchers, human resources professionals and service users and carers.

- Our research and findings apply across a variety of social care issues, for the benefit of a broad range of service users.

- Our guidance is gathered through a range of sources – organisations, practitioners, the policy community, research and service users and carers – to ensure its reliability and usefulness in practice.

- We do not focus solely on developing knowledge-based guidance; we also work with people to translate this guidance into practice. In turn, this improved practice yields new information, which we use to update our knowledge and practice findings.

- In an environment where children's and adults' services are increasingly disconnected, SCIE works across the divide to ensure joined-up working for families and continuity of service from children's to adults' services.

- We also aim to promote practice improvement by influencing social care policy at national and local levels. This is achieved through our work – with central government, local government and other public sector officials, with service providers and with higher and further education providers – to introduce and embed knowledge-based practice, and through feeding into consultations which may impact on social care service users.

- Our resources are authoritative, knowledge-based, user-friendly and freely available to all.

That is why our independent findings are increasingly being adopted by regulating, inspecting, training and improvement agencies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is how our guidance is positively influencing standards of service provision. And this is why over the next three years we will work hard to further affect practice change.

Our values

The following values underpin every aspect of SCIE's work. We promise to:

- have a service user focus
- be independent in our research and findings
- promote empowerment and change
- be committed to equality and diversity
- be transparent
- be accessible in all our work
- be accountable to our stakeholders.

To demonstrate our commitment to these values and to ensure they are reflected in all aspects of our work we will incorporate these values in:

- our approach to all the guides and resources we create or commission
- our dealings with everyone we work with
- our work to influence policy and change practice
- our staff appraisal system.

Our approach

SCIE's approach is collaborative. We work in consultation with those who can provide specialist expertise on projects, we work jointly with those with whom we share a common interest and we work in partnership with others when developing a common product. Our participation strategy aims to ensure that service users and carers and all other SCIE stakeholders are able to contribute meaningfully to our work.

Our organisation

Accountability

SCIE is an independent charity and a company limited by guarantee. We are regulated by the Charity Commission and subject to regulations applying to all companies in England and Wales. SCIE is governed by a board of trustees, which is made up of service users and representatives from the statutory, voluntary, private and academic sectors in social care and health. The board is responsible for guiding SCIE's work and ensuring our independence.

We have service level agreements with our main funders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These agreements set out what our funders expect of us and what we will deliver. We have a yearly review with our major funder – the Department of Health – to ensure that we are meeting our agreement.

How SCIE is funded

SCIE receives funding from the Department of Health in England, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland and from the Scottish Executive (although we have no formal role in Scotland). We also work in partnership with Scottish agencies where a UK-wide approach is helpful. SCIE has also received European funding and additional funds through the Department for Health and Department for Education and Skills' Options for Excellence project.

The size and shape of SCIE

At the time of printing this corporate plan, SCIE employed more than 60 staff. The workforce is divided into two main areas – the Knowledge Services team and the Corporate Services team.

The Knowledge Services team includes the Research and Reviews, Practice Development, Knowledge Management and E-learning teams, and is responsible for collating the knowledge base for SCIE's output and developing, disseminating and embedding SCIE's practice guidance.

The Corporate Services team, which is made up of the Finance, Stakeholder Participation, Human Resources, Communications, IT, Facilities and Administration teams, supports the production and dissemination of SCIE's resources, the development of key relationships and ensures the smooth running of the organisation.

Our achievements and lessons learnt

Achievements

Some examples of our achievements so far include:

■ SCIE has produced a range of guidance, much of which has a strong service user focus. Subjects vary and include fostering and adoption; direct payments; social work education; alcohol, drugs and mental health; people management in social care; service user participation and more. All of our guidance has been influenced by practitioners working in the field. Visit www.scie.org.uk/publications

■ SCIE has improved and re-launched a core resource for the social care sector, Social Care Online – the UK's largest database of social care information and research.

■ SCIE has worked extensively and collaboratively across the social care and health sectors and has established a number of networks including the Partners' Council, Practice Partners' Network, Collaboratives Network, the Parental Mental Health and Child Welfare Network and other networks. The networks are active development and information exchanges which bring together people that otherwise would not have the chance to collaborate.

■ SCIE has developed relationships with a number of government departments, national organisations, voluntary agencies, networks, service user organisations and other groups to influence social care policy and practice and to help shape the future of the social care sector.

■ SCIE has substantially strengthened its communications function to achieve greater reach and better quality products.

Our success in these areas is continuing. We are now working with our second group of practice partners, we are developing a People Management Network (mirroring the work we have done on the Parental Mental Health and Child Welfare Network) and we are continuing to produce a wide range of products. We recognise that there are many opportunities to enhance the impact of the work we are doing.

Lessons learnt

We have learnt some valuable lessons from our first few years, which have strengthened our resolve to:

■ build relationships with health and social care organisations, for example, the inspectorates, regulators and training organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP); the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS); and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), to promote the use of SCIE's work in practice

■ put more emphasis on working with practitioners and commissioners to change practice whilst continuing to produce and disseminate reliable information about practice

■ ensure that we are clear about what we are aiming to achieve, for whom and why

■ further develop the way knowledge is captured and generated in social care to avoid repetition, fill gaps and to have a shared understanding with other research bodies of what constitutes good information

■ continue to involve a wide range of stakeholders in a meaningful way (recognising that this is challenging and requires a sustained effort and creative approaches)

■ give seldom-heard people a voice and enable them to influence service development and provision

■ make closer links with providers in the independent sector.

our operating environment

Our policy context

UK

Significant policy issues that have affected the whole of the UK and that have influenced SCIE's work include:

- the Green Paper on welfare reform *A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work*

- the government's strategy for older people *Opportunity age – opportunity and security throughout life*

- the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report *Improving the life chances of disabled people*

- the changing role of voluntary and independent providers.

England

Significant policy issues that have affected and influenced SCIE's work in England include:

- the White Paper *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services.* With social care services placed equally alongside health services, the White Paper aims to change the way services are provided, placing greater choice and control in the hands of the people who use them.

- the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* and the resulting *Children Act 2004* set out a series of radical changes to the way services meet the needs of children and interact with each other

- the NHS changes proposed in *Commissioning a patient-led NHS*

- development of local area agreements

- the Wanless report *Securing good care for older people*

- the Department of Health's review of arm's length bodies

- the Department for Communities and Local Government's Supporting People programme and review.

Wales

SCIE is committed to working with partners in Wales and Northern Ireland to promote the application and sharing of best practice.

Legislative and policy changes in Wales that have affected and influenced SCIE's work include:

- *Wales: A better country*, the strategic agenda for the Welsh Assembly

- *Designed for life: Creating world class health and social care for Wales in the 21st Century*, a ten-year strategy for health and social care in Wales

- implementing the Children Act 2004 in Wales

- *Children and young people: A framework for partnership* – a strategy developed to coordinate services provided to children and young people in each local authority area

- *National service framework for children, young people and maternity services* which sets out standards for children's health and social services, and the interface of those services with education

- *Making the connections: Delivering better services in Wales*, the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for public services

- *Beyond boundaries: Citizen-centred local services for Wales*, the Beecham review of local government in Wales

- the Welsh Assembly Government's *Strategy for older people*

- *Fulfilled lives, supportive communities – a strategy for social services in Wales* (forthcoming).

Northern Ireland

SCIE is committed to working with partners in Northern Ireland and Wales to promote the application and sharing of best practice.

Significant policy issues that have affected and influenced SCIE's work in Northern Ireland include:

- the review of public administration which will bring major changes to the way health and social care services are commissioned and delivered by:

  - the introduction of a Strategic Health and Social Services Authority to replace the four boards with current commissioning responsibility for health and social care. The authority will have seven local commissioning groups based across Northern Ireland.

  - the introduction of a single Patient and Client Council to replace the existing four health and social services councils

  - a merger of the current 18 health and social services trusts to five trusts which will have primary responsibility for delivering health and social care services

- the targets and standards for health and social services set out in *Priorities for action* including:

  - fully integrated care and support in the community

  - improvements in children's services including child protection, adoption and support to children in care and leaving care

  - better mental health and learning disability services in line with the Bamford review

  - better quality services as set out in *Quality Standards for Health and Social Care.*

Our environment

The following trends are likely to influence the direction of our work:

An ageing population and longer life expectancy

As the population of the UK grows steadily older and people's life expectancy increases, the demands on social care and other public services will also grow. Older people already make up one of the largest groups using social care services. The sector will need to plan carefully to ensure adequate resources – including funding, people and skills – are available to meet the need.

A growing demand for independence

The focus in social care has moved from meeting people's needs with whatever services are available, to tailoring services to meet people's needs. And, increasingly, people are demanding the right to be independent and to choose services that support them in achieving this. Direct payments and independent budgets will play a major role in helping people to gain and retain their independence.

A growing desire to be part of a community

Corresponding with the desire to be independent, service users are also wanting to be active citizens and to contribute to the communities they live in. They want services that will enable them to be useful and to use their skills, and in a way that is responsive to their needs.

Cultural diversity

The social care sector must become more culturally aware than it has in the past. It must recognise that people will have different cultural needs and barriers that prevent them from accessing or making the best use of services. It will be a huge challenge for social care, as well as for other public services, to overcome these barriers and meet people's needs.

Integration of services

Increasingly, public services are becoming less about what suits the service provider best and more about what suits its customers best. In social care, this is being reflected in a greater integration of services – with health, housing and so on – as organisations realise that people do not experience services individually, but instead experience a 'whole package'.

More knowledge-based policy making

Greater accountability and readiness of information means that policy makers can base their policies on evidence of what works. SCIE has a core role to play in influencing knowledge-based policy making in social care.

Mobilisation of knowledge and information through information and communication technologies

Information and communication technologies – from computers, to handheld portable devices, to electronic whiteboards, to synchronised record-keeping systems and more – will greatly benefit the social care workforce over coming years. Workers will find it easier to access information, improve their skills and practice and will be more efficient and accurate in administering the services they provide.

our objectives

We have developed five key objectives for 2006–09 which we will apply to our work across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Objective 1

Contribute to better outcomes for users of adults' and children's services and their carers by identifying good practice and helping to embed it in everyday social care service provision.

We will achieve this objective by:

- ensuring the quality and authority of our knowledge base

- commissioning a range of new products, ensuring that we are always clear about what we are aiming to achieve, for whom and how

- developing a strategy for each of our initiatives to guide implementation and use

- consistently measuring and reviewing the take-up and impact of our work against our intended outcomes

- working with front-line practitioners and others involved in delivering and developing services, to test, improve and introduce our knowledge in everyday practice

- working with the inspection, regulation and improvement agencies to incorporate SCIE's practice guidelines into standards

- increasing the number of social care agencies using SCIE's products

- improving our relationships with the private and voluntary sectors and with other public service sectors.

Objective 2

Involve all stakeholders in SCIE's work and be recognised as a resource for those stakeholders.

We will achieve this objective by:

- using a range of participative techniques to involve our key stakeholders to ensure our output is practical and based on the best available knowledge

- actively engaging with service users and carers to establish priorities

- improving our commissioning structure to enhance user and carer involvement in the development of our products

- continuing to develop and strengthen our relationships with higher education institutions, as well as doing more work with those currently under-represented in SCIE's work, in particular, front-line practitioners (particularly those in low paid, non-qualified roles), service-provider organisations and the private and voluntary sectors

- building on our successes with the Practice Partners' Network and the Parental Mental Health and Child Welfare Network to create networks in other specialist areas

- tailoring our products according to the needs of different stakeholder groups

- continuing to develop our annual work programme with the Partners' Council, to ensure input from all of SCIE's key stakeholders.

Objective 3

Enhance the skills base and professional confidence of the social care workforce through our resources and practice development.

We will achieve this objective by:

- working with the agencies responsible for improving workforce practice and with social care managers and employers to identify and embed good practice

- supporting the involvement of practitioners in research and knowledge-based activities and promoting the importance of such activities

- developing an inter-agency network for those involved in people management in social care, including human resources professionals and those multi-tasking

- working with social care agencies to enhance their organisational development

- promoting the use of e-learning and electronic media in social care workforce development

- continuing to develop and support the social care leadership programme and other social care leadership initiatives.

<table>
<tr><td>**Objective**
4</td><td>**Act as a voice for social care in the UK and be a resource for government.**</td></tr>
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We will achieve this objective by:

- working with government and public sector officials through our representation on key groups and in leaders' forums to support service users', carers' and other key stakeholders' interests

- championing the value of social care research in helping to build policy and develop effective services

- building our capacity to anticipate and prepare for political, policy and practice changes which may have an impact on social care services

- using our findings to identify gaps in research and to influence the agenda for social care research and practice

- advocating for greater investment in social care research.

Objective 5

Address gaps and inadequacies in service provision for black and minority ethnic groups and 'seldom-heard'* groups.

We will achieve this objective by:

- establishing significant partnerships with key black and minority ethnic organisations and seldom-heard groups

- reviewing all projects to ensure that issues of relevance or significance to black and minority ethnic groups and seldom-heard groups have been addressed

- working to identify priority areas for service improvement for black and minority ethnic groups and seldom-heard groups

- ensuring that projects intended to improve outcomes for black and minority ethnic groups and seldom-heard groups are included in our annual work programme

- continuing to support black and minority ethnic leadership initiatives

- implementing SCIE's race equality scheme and measuring its impact on our work.

*SCIE prefers to use the term 'seldom-heard' over 'hard-to-reach'.
The term 'hard-to-reach' can be taken to imply that individuals are, of their own volition, difficult to engage, rather than that their disengagement is a result of agencies' failures to proactively seek their inclusion. Also, many people in the disability and service user movements favour the term 'seldom-heard'.

developing our capacity

Our finances

In the first years of its existence SCIE has logically focused on developing new ways of working and on developing a knowledge base. However, as reflected in our objectives, we will devote more resources to embedding knowledge into policy and practice over coming years.

Our funds so far have largely been used to identify good practice, produce written reports and distribute these reports to our stakeholders. While it is important that we continue to do this, we will be allocating a larger proportion of our resources to embedding good practice to achieve change. From 2006 onwards we aim to ensure our structure and resources encourage positive change in everyday practice.

We will continue to review practices and procedures to ensure that we give value-for-money to our sponsors and receive value-for-money from our contractors.

Our people

In a similar way to our finances, our early years have seen our own people management strategy focused on recruiting people who can identify good practice, build the knowledge base and produce and disseminate reports. Over the coming three years, to ensure that we are contributing to practice change, our priorities for SCIE staff and board will include:

■ training and developing our in-house experts into advocates for their specialist areas of work, able to promote and help implement our guidance into practice

■ increasing our capacity through recruitment and training to anticipate and prepare for political and policy changes

■ enhancing our internal capacity to evaluate our output and impact on the sector

■ increasing board members' involvement in promoting SCIE and its products to the range of stakeholders with whom they have influence

■ enhancing staff's capacity and ability, through awareness-raising and training and development, to work in an inclusive way in every aspect of their work

■ ensuring that our recruitment processes attract and retain black and minority ethnic applicants and applicants with experience as service users or carers

■ strengthening our capacity to build relationships with key stakeholders in front-line practice, higher education and in the voluntary and private sectors

■ engaging representatives in Wales and Northern Ireland and building a stronger regional presence in England, to work more closely with, and understand the needs of, local stakeholders

■ strengthening learning and development plans for staff to improve our capacity to meet SCIE's objectives

■ supporting staff to implement SCIE's race-equality scheme and other schemes that the organisation establishes

■ supporting staff in the use of e-learning to develop their skills.

Our systems

We are proud of the inclusive way of working we have developed at SCIE to identify knowledge about what works in social care and to translate that knowledge into good practice guidance. Our systems will need to be enhanced over the coming years to ensure that our work is outcomes-focused and is achieving change to policy and practice. Priorities will include:

- refining our project management system to sharpen the focus on implementing and embedding good practice

- improving our systems for gathering and analysing feedback on our products from our key stakeholders

- establishing procedures for consistently measuring the uptake and impact of our good practice guidance

- establishing procedures for assessing the impact of our race-equality scheme and any other schemes we develop

- developing processes, together with the social care inspection, regulation and improvement agencies, to ensure that our good practice is linked to standards

- enhancing our IT and communication systems to support representatives in Wales, Northern Ireland and the regions of England.

how we will recognise success

We will know that we have been successful if we:

- are recognised, used and trusted as a resource across all areas of social care, including practice, research and development, social work and social care education and training

- have contributed to lasting improvements to practice, based on evidence of practice change and feedback from service users, carers and front-line staff

- have contributed to a genuinely participative way of developing social care practice

- have contributed, with our partners, to the establishment of an agenda for social care research and practice development

- become an indispensable resource of reliable, authoritative practice guidance for inspectors, regulators, improvers, practitioners, policy makers, researchers and service users and carers.

Better knowledge for better practice

SCIE works with people and organisations throughout the social care sector to identify useful information, research and examples of good practice.

Using this information, we produce resources which evaluate practice in a particular area of social care, draw out key messages for good practice and identify areas where more research is needed to inform good practice.

Practitioners, researchers, service users and policy makers rely on SCIE's resources as a central and trusted point for knowledge-based good practice guidance.

SCIE's work covers the breadth of social care including services for adults, children and families, participation, human resource development, social work education, e-learning and the use of knowledge in social care.

This corporate plan outlines our objectives for the years 2006-09. It should be read in conjunction with our yearly business plans.

All our resources are available free of charge. For details visit www.scie.org.uk where you can view or order our resources and sign up for a regular email alert about future activities.

This publication is available in an alternative format upon request.

Social Care
Institute for Excellence
Goldings House
2 Hay's Lane
London SE1 2HB

tel 020 7089 6840
fax 020 7089 6841
textphone 020 7089 6893
www.scie.org.uk