

THE ROLE OF THE SSIW LINK INSPECTOR IN JOINT REVIEWS

Introduction

The overall role of the link inspector is to provide a bridge for the work of SSIW with local authorities in review, inspection, performance evaluation, development work and professional advice. Every inspector in SSIW acts as link for one or two authorities. Their main responsibilities are to:

- promote improvement in the quality of care and outcomes for service users;
- promote effective performance management of social services in local authorities;
- undertake annual evaluation of performance of social services in each authority and their capacity to improve;
- identify what actions each authority needs to take to improve the quality of their social services;
- assess progress in improvement.

They maintain a dialogue with the authorities for which they have responsibility and with other inspectorates/improvement agencies such as the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales and the Health Care Inspectorate for Wales.

Specific role in joint reviews

The link inspector is expected to work closely with the joint review team throughout the process. Their contribution is especially important at particular stages:

- briefing the lead reviewer about the annual performance evaluation;
- assisting the lead reviewer to obtain information from other inspectorates and improvement agencies;
- helping the joint review team and the local authority to complete the advance information template;
- facilitating set-up meetings with the local authority;
- attending the interim assessment meeting at the end of Phase 1 to review the evidence collected, decide the key areas for further scrutiny during the main fieldwork and to plan how that work will be conducted;
- taking part in the analysis and feedback meeting at the end of the fieldwork;
- attending feedback meetings in the local authority;
- responding to drafts of the final report;
- scrutinising the local authority's action plan;
- attending the meetings with elected members and others to present the report.

The part to be played by the link inspector in the fieldwork depends upon the analysis that emerges from the interim assessment meeting and factors such as the primary/specialist role of the link inspector within SSIW.

After the joint review

The link inspector has main responsibility for monitoring implementation of the recommendations from the joint review, in part through the annual performance evaluation but also through any additional scrutiny measures that may be agreed.

They will help to ensure that implementation is properly embedded in other processes derived from the Wales Programme for Improvement, such as the production of the local authority improvement plan and the joint risk analysis.