PHASE 1 - THE BROAD REVIEW

Introduction

The first phase of the joint review is a broad and comprehensive evaluation in which the focus is on gathering intelligence from a wide variety of sources and using a range of methods (surveys, file analysis, group interviews with stakeholders, review of existing information about performance). This is followed by the interim assessment in which the information from the first phase is analysed. The review team establishes the extent of reliable evidence already to hand, makes a provisional assessment of relative strengths and weaknesses, and determines the areas of focus for the detailed review fieldwork in the next phase.

Milestones:

- Notification (Week 1)
- Review planning meeting (Week 3)
- Set-up meeting (Week 4)
- Completion of the advance information template (Weeks 3-8)
- Surveys (Weeks 6-10)
- Phase 1 fieldwork (Week 12)
- Interim assessment (Week 14)
- Introductory meetings for Phase 2 (Week 18)

Notification

Local authorities will be reviewed in the same general order as in the first round of joint reviews. Each authority will be aware of the broad timing for its joint review from the time when the SSIW inspection programme is published and from the work done under the Wales Programme for Improvement to agree the annual regulatory plan.

Formal notification of the joint review is given to the authority at least three months before the broad review fieldwork starts, in the form of a written letter to the Chief Executive from the Chief Inspector of Social Services and the Auditor General for Wales. A copy of the notification letter is sent to the Director of Social Services. The letter names the lead reviewer and provides the local authority with copies of the guide to joint reviews in Wales and a guide for the nominated link officer.

The link officer

At this stage, the local authority will confirm the identity of its link officer with the lead reviewer. Joint reviews are detailed and complex activities that require considerable preparation and planning. They are mutual enterprises between the local authority, SSIW and WAO. All these organisations will be seeking to work to the highest possible standards throughout the period of the review but they will be operating under considerable pressure. It is important that the rest of the authority's work is not disrupted and each phase of the review has to be done on time, as reviewers may be involved in more than one review.

Link officers have a crucial role to play in managing the whole project. The link officer will need to have sufficient authority to identify and resolve issues. They will need a broad knowledge of the authority and the locality. It has been found helpful for the link officer to have some identified administrative support during the review, to ensure that the day-to-day programme is administered in an efficient way without tying up expensive management time. To assist the link officer in carrying out the tasks involved, many of which are necessarily complex pieces of work, detailed guidance is set out in the framework section of this handbook.

The key tasks of the link officer are to:

- provide project management for the review process on behalf of the authority;
- take responsibility for supplying the information needed for the review, including advance information and lists of service users for use in conducting surveys and case file analysis;
- plan and arrange the fieldwork programme with the lead reviewer and brief those involved;
- support the activities of reviewers during the fieldwork and help to resolve any difficulties in the timetable or with communication.

The lead reviewer will provide the link officer with all the relevant documents, including the joint review information leaflets (**Appendix 1.2**), publicity material and the advance information template (**Appendix 1.3**). The link officer will outline the way in which the local authority intends to inform key stakeholders, including the general public, about the joint review.

The review planning meeting

The meeting is attended by the:

- lead reviewer
- joint review information officer
- joint review support co-ordinator
- local authority link officer
- social services and corporate performance management officers

The meeting will cover plans for:

- completion of the advance information template;
- sharing of documents required for the joint review;
- provision of lists of service users and carers for the surveys and case samples;
- the broad review phase fieldwork.

An outline agenda for the data planning meeting is attached as **Appendix 1.4** in this section.

Introductory meeting

This meeting is attended by the director of social services, the first tier officer(s) with responsibility for social services functions, the link officer, the lead reviewer and the review support co-ordinator. The director will usually also invite other senior social services managers.

This meeting will cover:

- a general briefing on the joint review process and the outline timetable;
- confirmation of the joint review team membership;.

- an opportunity for the director and management team to highlight the current position of the authority and the local context within which social services function (political, financial, organisational) – advising the joint review team of any critical issues;
- the roles and expectations of the various key participants and stakeholders;
- a review of the work required for the rest of the review process;
- a discussion of any issues likely to affect the conduct of the review and agreeing milestone dates;
- future meeting and activity dates as required.

The meeting is an important opportunity for the joint review team to learn more about the authority and to plan the detail of further work. A standard agenda is suggested for the set-up meeting and this is attached as **Appendix 1.5** in this section.

Advance information

The joint review team will gather together and analyse existing information about all the fourteen areas in which formal judgements are made (pages 26 - 29 in the guide, section 0.5 in the handbook)) from a variety of sources:

- the annual performance evaluation of social services;
- performance indicators and other statistical data;
- Wales Programme for Improvement information;
- other inspectors and auditors;
- the local authority.

The joint review team seeks to use existing information and avoid duplicate requests. They will meet with representatives from SSIW and WAO (including the authority's auditor, relationship manager, link social services inspector), other inspectorates and improvement agencies to seek information about the local authority context and performance.

The local authority will be asked to provide:

- updates (as necessary) on information submitted for the performance evaluation and on performance indicators;
- information necessary to carry out surveys and case file samples (lists of users, referrals and cases);
- activity data in respect of case management processes
- the results of any recent user-carer and staff surveys carried out by the authority itself;
- information necessary to carry out the inspection fieldwork (who’s who and what’s where, lists of service providers and partner organisations, breakdown of team structures and the location of services);
- certain strategic documents (such as statutory plans).

Wherever possible, this information will be placed within a template (**Appendix 1.3** in this section) that is used to collate mainly quantitative data about performance and activity in each of the fourteen areas about which formal judgements are made. The template is then shared with the local authority by the joint review team and completion of the final version becomes a joint responsibility.

Central government regards self-assessment as one of the key principles of public service inspection. A primary source of information is the authority's own analysis of its position in relation to the fourteen fields and the validity of the evidence it is able to produce. This is available to the joint review team in the form of the self-assessment completed by the local authority as part of the annual performance evaluation of social services. The template invites the local authority to update this assessment and the evidence provided in support of it.

Some of the evidence may be contained in committee reports, planning documents and other documentation. Such reference documents should be given an index number. Local authorities are asked to provide information in a focused, evidence-based way that will help the joint review team to reach conclusions about the two main questions *How good are the services?* and *How well placed is the authority to maintain and improve services?* At this stage, there is particular merit on emphasising:

- quantitative material, rather than narrative descriptions;
- information about performance trends;
- illustrating points with data;
- evidence of activity and achievements;
- the impact upon service users, including case examples.

The authority is asked to produce an electronic version of the advance information template and two copies of all the references cited. One copy of each reference is to be submitted electronically to the joint review team for its library and one kept in the authority, to be accessible to the reviewers during the site visit. There are certain standard documents, such as statutory plans, that the joint review team will need routinely and a list of these can be found in the section of the Handbook that deals with advance information (1.3).

Where information about services and service users has to be made available from a number of agencies, the authority should consider how best to access and present that information. The self-assessment is particularly helpful where it has prepared following consultation with stakeholders. The local authority may wish to make it available to all those stakeholders who will be interviewed during the review, including members of staff.

Surveys

Questionnaire surveys are a key source of information for the broad review phase. The joint review process requires completion of three surveys:

1. <u>Service users and carers survey</u>

This is sent to a large, representative cross-section of service users and carers, with the sample chosen at random. It is in two parts. The first part sets out a series of straightforward statements, with a tick-box rating scale to ascertain the extent to which the person who completes the questionnaire agrees with the statement. Part 2 provides space for additional comments and its use is optional. The scale of the exercise allows information to be gathered from a large number of people. Some of the evidence can be shown in a quantified way that enables comparisons to be made between local authorities.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to gain a broad picture of the views of users and carers about their experience of social services. In particular, the questions focus upon the seven areas incorporated in the *how good are the services?* dimension of the overall judgement (access, case management and review, range of services, etc.).

The sample is chosen using a uniform formula to ensure that it is representative and that a proportionate return is received from the whole range of service users and carers within the authority, across both open and recently closed cases (within the last 3 to 4 months). The Joint Review Team provides the questionnaire materials and analyses the results. Financial assistance can be provided to help with advocacy and translation services, if the local authority is unable to meet this need.

Guidance for the local authority in conducting the survey is to be found in **Appendix 1.6** and a copy of the questionnaire in **Appendix 1.7**.

2. <u>Staff survey</u>

This questionnaire is an opportunity for staff to tell the joint review team about social services. The information collected through the questionnaire is used to help the team:

- understand the key issues within social services from the perspective of a representative cross-sample of staff ;
- identify areas for further enquiry;

- provide evidence for reaching a judgement in areas such as workforce, leadership and culture.

The questionnaires are analysed, discussed with the local authority and a summary is made available when the final report is published.

Guidance for the local authority in conducting the survey is in **Appendix 1.8** and a copy of the questionnaire in **Appendix 1.9**.

3. <u>Partners and stakeholders survey</u>

This questionnaire is sent out at an early stage in the joint review process, while the team is seeking to establish a broad understanding of social services and how they work with key partners and stakeholders. It provides an opportunity for these groups to provide their perspective about the quality of social services and the way in which the local authority is managing the social care agenda.

Guidance for the local authority in conducting the survey is in **Appendix 1.10** and a copy of the questionnaire in **Appendix 1.11**.

Broad review fieldwork

The joint review team will spend one week in the authority to carry out the fieldwork associated with the broad phase. This has four main elements:

- case file analysis
- meetings with groups of stakeholders
- a programme of visits by the lay assessor
- open access.

1. <u>Case file analysis</u>

The joint review team analyses a sample of case files from each of the major service areas. They look at key aspects of social services provision to learn how the needs of service users and carers are assessed and met. Again, enquiries focus upon the seven areas incorporated in the *how good are the services?* dimension of the overall judgement (assessment, case management and review, range of services provided, etc.). The case file analysis provides strong evidence about the way in which the local authority's policies and systems are experienced at the level of service users and carers

The local authority makes available around 80 case files for examination by the reviewers. The lead reviewer is responsible for selecting the case files to be seen, drawing from a sample of names provided by the authority. Usual practice is that 8-10 cases are selected from each main service group. The selection is finalised no less than 2 weeks before the beginning of file reading. Once the case sample has been agreed, the case manager/practitioner is asked to complete a brief pro forma in respect of the case.

The joint review team will read approximately 45 of the more complex cases in depth (5 from each of the user groups). Depending on the size of the authority, another 3-5 cases for each services user group will be scrutinised in respect of specific areas such as access, assessment, range of services, etc. Reviewers may ask to see other files for a service user (e.g. residential, day care, etc.).

The authority should assemble the requested files in the agreed location by the first day of file reading, making provision for secure storage. Each If a file is required by a social work team during the case file analysis period, reviewers will ensure that it is read and returned as soon as possible. Files will not be taken off site and will be returned to the teams immediately after the case file analysis. It is usually most efficient for the files to be made available at a central location, which the reviewers can use as a base for this period in the authority. Where case records are maintained on electronic systems, access to suitable terminals for reading these records should be provided or paper copies made available.

Because of the powers to require information vested in the National Assembly for Wales by the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, reviewers have the authority to examine any file/record connected with reviews and investigations.

The file reading sample will be used to select a smaller number of cases for more thorough examination by means of interviews with individual users and carers (if they consent), case managers and service providers. More information about this aspect of the joint review is contained in the section on case studies.

Reviewers may ask to see further case files during both the broad and the detailed phases, seeking further evidence about emerging themes.

Guidance for the local authority in respect of case file analysis is in **Appendix 1.12** and a copy of the case file schedule for the individual case manager/practitioner in **Appendix 1.13.**

2. Meetings with stakeholders

During this week on site, there is an opportunity for a maximum of five group meetings with stakeholders. This is likely to include:

- senior elected members and managers;
- the social services management team;
- partner organisations;
- the service user and carer reference group.

The purpose of the meetings is to enable these groups to outline in broad terms what they regard as the key issues for social services. If requested to do so, the joint review team can provide a list of potential agenda items for the meetings with partner organisations and the service user and carer reference group. It is usual for two reviewers to attend each meeting. The lay assessor will decide with the lead reviewer the extent of their involvement, although they will usually take part in the meeting with the reference group.

3. Programme of visits by the lay assessor

The role of the lay assessor is described in Section 0.3.2 of the Handbook. Lay assessors add a different perspective to the work of review teams by representing the views of people who use services and the wider public. They complement the work done by professional inspectors, in part by focusing on the experiences and interests of service users and carers in their relations with social services and partner organisations.

The local authority is asked to plan a programme of visits by the lay assessor in this week so that they can:

- talk with people who use services;
- visit places where services are provided (including contact centres, day facilities and residential settings).

Although the lay assessor will need some briefing from the local authority about the facilities that are to be visited (especially if there are current issues such as plans for change of use or closure, refurbishment, etc.), this is not an inspection activity and some degree of informality is appropriate. The primary focus of the lay assessor will be on the experience offered to the public. Lay assessors may wish to prepare for visits, for example, by reading service information leaflets, recent inspection reports and other available written information.

The lay assessor should abide by a code of conduct and there is a guide for them that describes their responsibilities when visiting service provision. They are expected to:

- respect the confidential nature of any information they receive;
- respect the private spaces of those they meet
- behave in a way that is sensitive to the diverse needs and circumstances of individual service users and carers;
- treat people with courtesy and respect and listen to what they have to say;
- ask questions in an appropriate way and listen attentively;
- act at all times in a manner which maintains confidence in their integrity, independence and open-mindedness;

- refrain from providing advice to service users or staff, except with the agreement of the lead reviewer;
- avoid using the review as a platform for furthering particular causes;
- make reasonable and fair judgements based on what they have seen and heard;
- promptly alert colleagues about any matters of concern.

4. Open access

The joint review team provides leaflets, posters, model press releases and other material to help the local authority inform people about joint review and explain how they can become involved. In this publicity material, the joint review team encourages people to express their views and tell of their experiences through diverse means - in writing, by telephone, by e-mail or access to a web-site. During their time on site, they will review the material received in response to this invitation.

At the end of the broad phase fieldwork, the joint review team meets with the director of social services, the heads of service and the link officer to provide some immediate feedback and to discuss some of the themes that may be emerging. At this stage, the review is very much a work in progress; the views expressed will be provisional and liable to change as more evidence accumulates.

Interim assessment

During this stage, the information from all aspects of the broad review is analysed.

The joint review team meets to:

- establish the extent of reliable evidence already to hand, highlighting any gaps in the evidence that need to be filled;
- make a provisional assessment of relative strengths and weaknesses;
- determine the areas of focus for the main fieldwork.

In deciding the focus for the main fieldwork, the team will aim to present a balanced picture of the service. This means following up any areas of significant concern and also areas of good practice. The decision will also take into account any national priorities. The team may look for slices or cross-sections of service that are likely to be representative of broader issues.

The meeting is chaired by an external moderator and this is a key element in the quality assurance of joint reviews. The moderator will advise the lead reviewer and, as appropriate:

- challenge any interim findings or hypotheses, to ensure that sufficient evidence is available;
- clarify the additional information needed from the detailed review fieldwork.

At the conclusion of the interim assessment, there should be:

- a set of questions or issues that need to be explored during the fieldwork stage;
- an assessment of where the resources of the joint review team should be allocated, in order to focus on the key issues for that review;

- an assessment of the data available and identification of items to be checked, of further information to be sought and of material likely to assist in compiling the final report.

Once the interim assessment has been completed, the lead reviewer will start planning the programme for the detailed review fieldwork with the local authority link officer.

Introductory meetings for the detailed review

Members of the joint review team will spend one day in the local authority to:

- introduce themselves;
- provide briefings about the review process and answer any questions;
- give some feedback about the interim assessment;
- discuss plans for the detailed review fieldwork.

The meetings are meant to be introductory. Many of the participants will have opportunities during the next phase of the process to engage in more extensive dialogue with the joint review team.

The programme for these meetings will be tailored to meet the needs of the specific authority. It is usual for meetings to take place with:

- the social services management team;
- the Chief Executive and leading members (executive and scrutiny);
- social services staff[1];
- key stakeholders;
- the service user and carer reference groups.

[1] Reviewers welcome a cross-section of staff attending these meetings to ensure that there is good communication about the purpose and format of the review.