

Advance information Guidance

The joint review team will gather together and analyse existing information about all the fourteen areas in which formal judgements are made (Handbook Section 0.6) 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 review 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 (Handbook Section 1.03) 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. This approach is strongly endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government and bodies such as the Welsh Local Government Association. 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.

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 in 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 in it. One copy of each reference is to be submitted 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 guidance about these are in document 1.3.2.

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.