

Fieldwork visits - briefing for service providers

When visiting service settings, a programme for the visit is often helpful. This might comprise:

- a short meeting with the manager and a tour of the premises *15 minutes*
- a look at processes *30 minutes*
- a meeting with staff (not including the manager) *30 minutes*
- a meeting with the manager *30 minutes*;
- meetings with service users *30 minutes*.

Each service setting may wish to provide in advance some background information (such as an outline of the work they do, information leaflets, staffing structure, budget, etc.), a SWOT analysis, operational plans and recent inspection reports. Please make this material available to the joint review team at least two days in advance of the visit.

Service users should be informed about the nature and purpose of the visit in advance. They should have access to copies of the general leaflet about joint reviews and to the more detailed briefing note for those in service settings that are included in the programme of visits.

Information

Accurate and clear information about the review is essential, if unnecessary anxiety or uncertainties are to be avoided. Please pay particular attention to the following points.

- Make sure everybody understands the nature and focus of the review and why they are being seen.

- Everybody should be provided with a copy of the relevant joint review leaflets and information about the codes of conduct for reviewers and lay assessors;
- Make sure that they know the name(s) of the reviewer(s) undertaking the visit.
- Fieldwork time scales for the review are usually tight, so punctuality is important for all those involved, including the joint review team. Delays may well impact on numbers of people.

Areas for examination

The fieldwork visits are a crucial means of obtaining evidence regarding the areas for examination in which judgements are made. The Joint Review Handbook outlines these areas and, when asking questions, the reviewers will focus upon them. We will be looking in particular at two key issues:

- How well are needs currently being met by social services?
- How well equipped is the local authority to deliver improvements in the quality of those services?

We will have prepared some questions, in part to check out some of the information we've already received. As well as asking questions, we want to make sure that staff have the chance to talk about the issues that concern them and to tell us about their experiences. We are interested in things that are working well as much as those things that need to improve.