

## **PHASE THREE - FOLLOWING THROUGH**

### **Introduction**

The next phase of the joint review focuses on public accountability, achieving improvement and monitoring the progress made in response to the review. It involves presentation of the report to elected members in a meeting open to the public. The local authority produces an action plan and there is a monitoring framework within which the local authority, SSIW and ACiW work together to ensure positive outcomes for service users and carers.

### **Milestones:**

- Draft report (Week 31)
- Action plan (Week 42)
- Report publication and presentation (Week 46)
- Handover (Week 54)
- Follow up activity
- Signing-off (1 year later)

### **Draft report**

The report will be drafted by the joint review team following the final assessment, with the lead reviewer taking primary responsibility. The report will expand on the headline findings presented to the authority in the feedback meetings, giving examples of evidence to support the conclusions. The report will not attempt a detailed account of all the evidence and process of the review. The sources of evidence, together with summary results from the surveys and case file sample, will be appended to the report.

The overall judgement of the report will be shown in grid form, with the two axes corresponding to the two main questions of the joint review framework - *How*

*good are the services?* and *How well placed is the authority to sustain and improve performance?* The team will also give assessments under each heading of the framework, to show better the relative strengths and areas for development and the components of the overall judgement. The report also considers the actions the local authority should build into its action plan. It will contain specific recommendations (for example, on matters of compliance to statute and guidance) and broader priorities for improvement.

There are rigorous arrangements for quality assurance, moderation and formal approval of all joint review reports. These operate throughout the process of drafting each report. For example, the initial draft report is scrutinised by the external moderator and revised as necessary before it is sent to the local authority.

The joint review team will aim to send this draft report to the Director of Social Services five weeks after the final assessment. At the same time, a copy of the report will be provided to the Chief Executive and the portfolio holder(s) with responsibility for social services. The joint review team will request written comment on matters of accuracy and clarification and will arrange a meeting to discuss the draft with the local authority two weeks later. It is anticipated that any response from the authority will be channelled via the Director of Social Services. The report, amended as appropriate, will then be prepared for publication. A summary will be produced as a separate document after consultation with Director of Social Services.

Further details of the process for producing reports, responding to comments and resolving disagreements are set out in Section 3.3 of the Handbook.

### **The local authority action plan**

At the meeting held to discuss the draft report, the joint review team will ask the local authority to draw up an action plan in response to the recommendations. The primary purpose of the review is to improve local services for users and carers. It is essential that the process lead to the production of an ambitious but

realistic action plan that is implemented vigorously by the local authority and effectively monitored by SSIW and ACiW. The action plan is not published as part of the joint review report but should be available at the time of publication.

The review team will engage in discussion with the authority about its arrangements for producing the action plan from the outset of the review. The local authority is encouraged to adopt an inclusive approach to the task. Any plan is likely to be far more robust if the work is undertaken in consultation with key partners and stakeholders (including service users and carers).

SSIW and ACiW will have considerable responsibilities for evaluating, monitoring and providing feedback on how effectively the plan is implemented. Their contribution to the process of producing an action plan is organised through the lead reviewer who should be involved appropriately by the local authority throughout. The local authority will receive a written response to any draft action plan, giving advice about the way in which the plan deals with the recommendations and priorities for action from the joint review.

The draft action plan should be presented to a session of the Council (Cabinet/Executive Board or Committee) at the same time as the joint review report. A copy of the draft action plan as endorsed by this meeting is normally sent to the lead reviewer at least four weeks before the date when the report is formally presented.

The authority is encouraged to share the findings of the review widely and to consult on their action plan, using established consultative bodies or special meetings. The final plan should be shared with the lead reviewer and formally agreed by the authority within eight weeks of the report's publication, during the handover meeting.

Further guidance about the process of preparing and agreeing the action plan is to be found in Section 3.6 of the Handbook.

### **Report presentation, publication and dissemination**

The joint review team will arrange with the local authority to present the report to Councillors in a meeting to which the public has access. The publication date for the report will be the day of the presentation. It is expected that those attending the meeting will have an opportunity to read the report in advance, on the understanding that there is a media embargo on the report until after the presentation.

The report becomes a public document at the date and time of its presentation but it is not officially published until the day after. On publication, it will be placed on the joint review web-site.

The lead managers in SSIW and ACiW are responsible for dealing with issues about the presentation and publication of the report on behalf of their organisations. This includes including briefing the media on behalf of the joint review team and responding to press enquiries.

The lead manager from SSIW will provide the Minister for Health and Social Services with a briefing in advance of publication and liaise with the press office in the National Assembly about any media statement that may be produced. A press conference may be held to publicise the report's findings. Embargoed copies of the report will be sent to the authority's local MPs and Assembly Members the day before the presentation.

It is important that the report and summary reach a wide readership of politicians, staff, other agencies and the public. The joint review team will supply copies of the report and report summary so that the local authority can distribute them to those who participated in the review and to inform the general public of the outcome. The authority is asked to distribute the report and summary to its staff, other agencies and local information points. The lead reviewer will visit the authority to present the key findings to the service users and carers reference group and, if requested, to take part in a workshop organised by the local authority for other stakeholders (including staff in social services). SSIW and ACiW will also circulate the report to their own key stakeholders.

Additional guidance in respect of report presentation, publication and dissemination is in Section 3.6 of the Handbook.

### **Handover meeting**

About eight weeks after the publication of the report, the review support co-ordinator will arrange a handover meeting. This involves the local authority, the SSIW link inspector, the ACiW relationship manager and the District Auditor. In the meeting, the action plan and progress to date are reviewed. Agreement is reached about:

- any routine monitoring arrangements;
- the roles of SSIW and ACiW in following up progress.

The timing and nature of any formal follow-up will be determined at this meeting. In normal circumstances, the parties agree to meet after a further year to sign off the process.

At this point, responsibility passes from the lead reviewers and the lead managers to the link inspector, the relationship manager and the District Auditor. The link inspector is required to liaise with relevant deputy chief inspectors in organising any monitoring work over and above the annual performance evaluation of social services. Similar management arrangements apply within ACiW.

### **Follow-up work**

The scope and nature of the follow-up work will be agreed in the light of:

- the review findings, (especially the impact upon service users and carers of the areas identified in the report as in need of development);
- the discussion at the handover meeting;
- the effectiveness of the local authority's own arrangements for monitoring progress;
- the level of political concern.

Wherever possible, any follow up exercise will precede the annual performance evaluation undertaken by SSIW and the work will be an agreed part of the annual

regulatory plan. It is likely that the priorities for action arising from the joint review and from the performance evaluation will coincide. In accordance with the principle that the scale of inspection is in proportion to risk, more time will be sent on services that were a cause for concern and less on those where it is possible to be confident of a positive response.

In authorities where risk is regarded as being low, it is likely that SSIW and ACiW would want to spend at least two days following up the implementation of the action plan and the outcome for service users and carers. In medium-risk authorities (i.e. in general, those with a judgement of *inconsistent* and *uncertainly placed*), there would be a minimum of three days follow-up.

There is further guidance about the nature of follow-up work in Section 3.9 of the Handbook.

### **Signing off the joint review process**

The link inspector, the relationship manager and the appointed auditor will usually arrange a signing-off meeting about a year after the handover meeting. SSIW and ACiW will provide a record of this meeting and formal confirmation that the joint review process has ended. Outstanding actions will be taken up in the annual evaluation of social services performance and other regular elements of the Wales Programme for Improvement.