

April 2006

Joint review

Cyddolygiad

# Joint Review Partnership Agreement

**SSIW AGCC**  
SOCIAL SERVICES AROLYGIAETH  
INSPECTORATE GWASANAETHAU  
FOR WALES CYMDEITHASOL CYMRU

  
**WALES AUDIT OFFICE**  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

## Partnership Agreement

This Partnership Agreement between the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW) and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) is intended to provide a framework to govern the planned examination of social services in all 22 unitary authorities in Wales. It is not a legal partnership but is a collaboration for the more effective delivery of the programme. The programme is scheduled to be completed within a five year cycle.

## Statutory Basis for Joint Working

Joint Reviews are carried out in accordance with the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, which gives the National Assembly for Wales the power to conduct reviews of the way in which all local authorities discharge their social services functions. The task of carrying out reviews is delegated to the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales. The Government of Wales Act 1998 (as amended) enables the Auditor General to participate in these reviews.

## Role of the Partnership

The SSIW and Wales Audit Office will carry out an agreed programme of reviews to:

- provide an objective assessment of how well people are being served by social services;
- make a constructive contribution towards the improvement of the services provided;
- help safeguard the interests of service users and carers;
- promote better value for money in the provision of social services; and
- inform the development of social care policy in Wales.

## Partnership Principles

The Partnership will work within an operating framework based upon the following key principles: SSIW and WAO will seek:

- To work as a genuine partnership with common goals and a commitment to respect, participation, sharing information and open discussion.
- To have a shared and equal responsibility for delivering the programme of review.
- To recognise that the role of the Partners is not necessarily static, but will be flexible to reflect any changes in priorities/circumstances. Any changes in substance to the way the Partnership operates will be agreed by both Partners.
- To contribute the particular skills and expertise of their respective organisations to the work within an integrated approach.
- To promote greater partnership working and collaboration with other key players such as HIW and CSIW; and for integrating the work as part of the wider objective of co-ordinating regulatory activity.
- To deliver a well planned and well managed programme of reviews.
- To deliver an objective, common and consistent standard of work.
- To be constructive and forward looking and to work in collaboration with unitary authorities.
- To report fairly and accurately, without fear or favour.
- To provide each local authority with clear, well-grounded judgements and priorities for action.
- To develop and refine the programme of work to deliver improved outcomes in terms of both quality and effectiveness.
- To learn from experience.

## Administration of Partnership

Overall responsibility for managing the Partnership (and the programme of reviews) rests jointly with the Chief Social Services Inspector and the Auditor General for Wales who will put in place arrangements for:

- managing and co-ordinating the review programme; and
- managing each organisation's contribution to specific reviews.

Progress meetings will be held every six months between the Chief Social Services Inspector and the Auditor General for Wales.

A nominated representative (known as the Lead Manager) from each partner organisation will have joint executive responsibility for delivery of the programme. The Lead Managers will normally attend the progress meetings.

The day-to-day management of joint reviews will be overseen by a Steering Group comprising representatives drawn from each partner organisation. Steering Group meetings will take place every six weeks or more regularly if deemed necessary. The Steering Group will comprise senior staff drawn from both organisations as deemed appropriate by the Lead Managers.

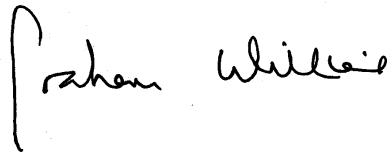
The detailed review programme will be conducted in accordance with the work protocols agreed by both partner organisations covering the following areas of activity:

- staffing and scheduling of the work programme;
- day-to-day management of the programme and individual reviews within it;
- quality assurance including moderation;
- dispute resolution;
- production and publication of reports; and
- complaints.

## Funding of Review Programme

Funding for Joint Reviews is provided to the SSIW by the National Assembly for Wales. The costs incurred by the Wales Audit Office are reimbursed quarterly by the SSIW on the basis of detailed invoices.

The volume of resources input by Wales Audit Office will be agreed at the start of each year, based upon an agreed programme of work. The fee scales charged by the Wales Audit Office will also be agreed annually with SSIW. Any changes in the volume of resources committed by Wales Audit Office to the review programme will be agreed by SSIW.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Graham Williams**  
**Chief Social Services Inspector**

Date: 11 April 2006



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Jeremy Colman**  
**Auditor General for Wales**

Date: 11 April 2006

## Protocol: Staffing and Scheduling of the Work Programme

Stage	Accountability	Notes
Nationally agreed programme	Steering Group	Councils will be reviewed in the same general order as the first round. This will mean on average 4/5 reviews per year.
Scheduling individual reviews	Lead Managers/ Review Co-ordinators/ SSIW support staff	The timing of each individual review will need to accommodate factors such as major holiday periods and availability of key personnel and reviewers.
Co-ordinating joint reviews with other regulatory activity	Review Co-ordinators/ Wales Audit Office Relationship Managers/SSIW link inspectors	Wales Audit Office relationship managers will need to take account of joint reviews in the Regulatory Plan for each Council to ensure that the work of all regulators is properly co-ordinated and managed.
Allocating staff and other resources to individual reviews	Lead Managers/ Review Co-ordinators	Lead Managers from Wales Audit Office and SSIW will agree the respective membership of the teams for individual reviews and agree the overall resources required for each review.
Securing staff resources from Wales Audit Office and SSIW	Lead Managers/ Review Co-ordinators	Lead Managers will use the internal mechanisms of their respective organisations to secure the necessary staff resources to deliver the reviews within the timescales agreed.
Monitoring resources	Lead Managers/ Review Co-ordinators	Wales Audit Office and SSIW will monitor the costs incurred by their own respective organisations to ensure each individual review and the overall programme is delivered within the agreed budget.

## Protocol: Day to day management of the programme and individual reviews within it

Stage	Accountability	Notes
Overall management of the programme	Steering Group	Meetings to take place every 6 weeks or more regularly if deemed necessary.
Identify and manage Lead Reviewers	Lead Managers	Lead Managers will provide executive management and support to lead reviewers.
Ensure effective participation of Wales Audit Office and SSIW reviewers in the programme	Lead Reviewers/ Review Co-ordinators	Liaising with the Lead Reviewer, Wales Audit Office and SSIW Review Co-ordinators will ensure that reviewers from their respective organisations are adequately trained and briefed to effectively fulfil their respective roles.
Supporting review teams on site	Lead Reviewers/ Review Co-ordinators/ SSIW support staff	The Lead Reviewer is responsible for supporting review team members on site with administrative support from SSIW support staff. Further advice and support to be provided by Review Co-ordinators where appropriate.
Providing effective co-ordination and liaison between staff in Wales Audit Office and SSIW	Review Co-ordinators	Review Co-ordinators will provide and maintain effective working relationships with other staff from Wales Audit Office and SSIW to ensure data and information is provided for the review and an integrated approach is maintained.
Monitoring the progress of individual reviews	Steering Group/ Review Co-ordinators	Overall progress will be overseen by the Steering Group. Review Support Co-ordinators to monitor on a day-to-day basis to ensure reviews are on track.
Ensuring effective follow-up arrangements are in place	Review Co-ordinators/ Relationship Managers/ SSIW Link Inspectors	Review Co-ordinators will link with Relationship Managers and SSIW Link Inspectors to put in place follow-up arrangements which are effectively integrated with WPI and SSIW performance evaluation.
Developing effective links with other inspectorates and regulatory bodies	Lead Managers/ Review Co-ordinators	To ensure closer alignment with other regulatory bodies, avoiding duplication of work and an integrated approach overall.

## Protocol: Day to day management of the programme and individual reviews within it

Stage	Accountability	Notes
Developing the methodology	Steering Group	In partnership with other key stakeholders.
Updating joint review materials and website	Review Co-ordinators/ Methodology sub group/SSIW support staff and Wales Audit Office Communications	Compiling and updating the joint review guide, handbook, reviewer's toolkit and website as appropriate.

## Protocol: Quality assurance including moderation

Stage	Accountability	Notes
The review findings and judgements should be based on all the available evidence and reflect the considered view of the entire review team	Lead Reviewer	When agreement cannot be reached the Lead Reviewer should decide what best represents the considered view of the team.
The findings/judgements will be presented to the 'Moderator' for challenge and agreement at the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interim analysis/risk assessment meeting; and</li> <li>final analysis meeting</li> </ul>	Lead Reviewer	The Moderator will chair the meetings and satisfy herself that the findings stand up to detailed scrutiny. (The Moderator will also be involved in the review planning meeting). More detailed information on the role of the Moderator can be found in 'A Guide to Joint Reviews in Wales'.
Agreement on the judgements (or otherwise) will be formally recorded by the Lead Reviewer, the Moderator and the Co-ordinators.	Lead Reviewer/ Moderator/Co-ordinators	Areas of unresolved disagreement will also be recorded and referred to the Co-ordinators or Lead Managers for resolution.
Draft report to be produced and circulated to all team members for comment	Lead Reviewer	
Revised draft report to be submitted to Coordinators for review	Lead Reviewer/ Co-ordinators	
Agreed draft report to be submitted to Local Authority for validation/comment	Review Support Co-ordinator	Submitted on behalf of the Lead Reviewer. The Review Support Co-ordinator would also be responsible for checking that all the various stages have been completed.
Draft Report to be cleared with Local Authority.	Lead Reviewer	
'Revised' draft report to be submitted to Lead Managers for sign off	Lead Reviewer	
Report 'Signed off'	Lead Managers	

## Protocol: Dispute resolution

Stage	Accountability	Notes
Send agreed draft report to Council	Review Support Co-ordinator	Draft report sent on behalf of Lead Reviewer for comment on matters of accuracy and clarification.
Written comments received and considered	Lead Reviewer	To consider comments and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correct any factual inaccuracies;</li> <li>• provide any necessary clarification; and</li> <li>• attempt to resolve any other matters with the Council.</li> </ul>
Requests for further evidence	Lead Reviewer/ Review Team	The lead reviewer may request further evidence or discuss further with the Council and the Review Team any points raised which may justify a change to the findings.
Changes to the findings	Moderator and Lead Managers	The lead reviewer may not make any significant change to the findings without the agreement of the moderator and lead managers.
Challenges to the judgements	Lead Reviewer/ Review Team and Moderator	In the event of a challenge from the Council to any of the judgements the Lead Reviewer should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain the basis for the judgement to the Council;</li> <li>• consider grounds given by the Council for a change; and</li> <li>• discuss any justification for a change with the moderator and review team.</li> </ul>
Informing the Council	Lead Managers	The Lead Manager should inform the Council of any decisions made with regard to any changes to findings or judgements.
Resolving further challenges	Lead Managers	If the Council still does not accept the findings or judgements of the review, it should state its grounds for disagreement in writing for lead managers to consider and reach a final view.
Notifying the Council	Lead Managers	The lead managers will inform the Council of the decision and the reason for it.

## Protocol: Production and publication of reports

Stage	Accountability	Notes
Drafting report	Lead Reviewer	'Print production' arrangements need to be in place.
Drafting press release	Wales Audit Office Press Officer, with SSIW Press officer and Lead Reviewer	
Drafting covering letter	Lead Manager	
Quality Assurance	External Moderator/ Review Co-ordinators/ Lead Managers	
External clearance of report and press release with LA	Report author	
Internal clearance of report and press release	Lead Managers	Will need to be cleared with the Chief Social Services Inspector and the Auditor General.
Proofing of word document	SSIW	English and Welsh versions. Issues of grammar, spelling, punctuation and compliance with 'house' rules.
Commission translation and design	SSIW Communications	Compliance with report style guide and style sheets.
Agree distribution list	SSIW Communications	Will also need to be cleared with the Lead Reviewer and Lead Managers.
Proofing of designed document	SSIW	English and Welsh versions.
Final sign off to print	Lead Managers	
Production of 'slide presentation' to be given to Council.	Lead Reviewer	Copies of presentation to be submitted to Review Co-ordinators for comment.
Press release issued and media briefing if necessary	Wales Audit Office and SSIW press officers	
Main distribution and future requests for hard copies	SSIW Communications	
Posting to SSIW website of press release and reports in English and Welsh	Wales Audit Office E-Communications	

## Protocol: Complaints

Stage	Accountability	Notes
<b>Making a complaint</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All complaints received should be referred to the Review Co-ordinator and details entered in a complaint log.</li> </ul>	Review Co-ordinators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A preliminary response will be provided within 15 working days.</li> </ul>	Review Co-ordinators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A complex or serious complaint may take some time to investigate; the complainant will be notified of the likely date a full response will be provided.</li> </ul>	Review Co-ordinators	
<b>What if the complainant is not satisfied with the response?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of the complaint and the report will be reviewed by the Lead Managers.</li> </ul>	Lead Managers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A response will be provided within 15 working days. Contact details of the relevant Complaints Officer will be provided at the same time.</li> </ul>	Lead Managers	
<b>What if the complainant is still not satisfied?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The complainant should submit a formal complaint to the relevant Complaints Officer.</li> </ul>	Relevant Complaints Officer	The Lead Managers will determine which Complaints Officer is best placed to handle the matter.