

4. Guide for the local authority performance inspection co-ordinator

Introduction

Performance inspections are detailed and complex activities that require considerable preparation and planning. They are mutual enterprises between the local authority and the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA). Both organisations will be seeking to work to the highest possible standards throughout the period of the inspection 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 inspection has to be done on time, as inspectors may be involved in more than one inspection.

Local authority performance inspection co-ordinators have a crucial role to play in managing the whole inspection. This document is intended to provide helpful guidance on the main areas of work involved. The inspection co-ordinators 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 inspection co-ordinator to have some identified administrative support during the inspection to ensure that the day-to-day programme is administered in an efficient way without tying up expensive management time. If the local authority co-ordinator holds a senior management position it is essential for them to appoint a support officer as well as an administrator.

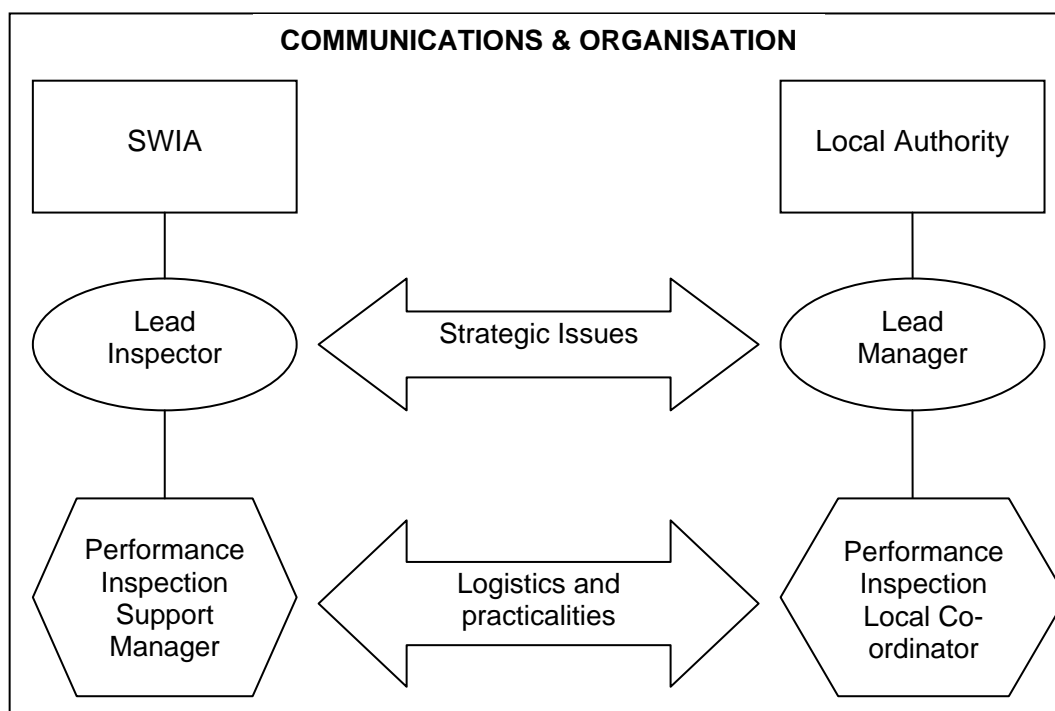
Your role as an inspection co-ordinator

The key tasks of the inspection co-ordinator are to:

- provide support management for the inspection process on behalf of the authority;
- take responsibility for supplying the information needed for the inspection, including advance information and lists of service users, staff, carers, partners and stakeholders for use in conducting surveys and case file analysis;
- plan and arrange the fieldwork programme with the lead inspector and the SWIA support manager and brief those involved; and
- support the activities of inspectors during the fieldwork and help to resolve any difficulties in the timetable or with the communication. As inspection co-ordinator, you will link to the SWIA inspection support manager during the inspection. It is recommended that the

inspection co-ordinator has clear links with a senior manager within the council, who can advise you on complex issues.

This senior manager in the authority will work closely with the lead inspector, and be the first point of contact for the lead inspector.



Initial meeting between SWIA and senior social work services managers

This meeting is the formal start of work within the authority. It is attended by the chief inspector or depute chief inspector, the lead inspector and other members of the inspection team. For the local authority, it is expected that the Director of Social Work Services (or comparable post), the Chief Social Work Officer, the managers with responsibility for social services functions and the inspection co-ordinator will attend. The Director may invite other relevant managers in social services and corporate officers. The meeting is an important opportunity for the inspection team to learn more about the authority and to plan the detail of further work. The Director and the management team will be able to highlight any critical issues that have arisen within the authority and discuss arrangements for ongoing communication during the joint inspection process.

It is useful to put in diaries some regular meetings before and during the period when the inspection team is on-site, to allow for discussion of any

emerging themes or to provide mutual feedback about how the inspection is progressing.

Inspection planning meetings

Soon after the initial meeting, the SWIA lead inspector, support manager, the local authority's lead manager and the inspection co-ordinator will meet. This group will be in regular contact during the inspection. It is advisable for them to programme in regular (monthly) meetings.

Advance information

The inspection team requires advance information about social work services. As inspection co-ordinator, you will receive a copy of the Self Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ) before the first meeting. There is also a standard list of documents that are needed to provide a context for the inspection (Advance Information). You will be informed which of these documents we hold already. The timescales for sending these to the SWIA inspection support manager will be clearly identified in the Request for Advance Information.

It is essential that this information and the SEQ are returned by the specified date in order to ensure that the SWIA inspection team can analyse the information thoroughly. Failure to do so may affect the evaluations made by SWIA.

Please ensure that documents provided by the local authority are authorised and reflect current agreed policies and procedures. Draft documents may be helpful but these should be labelled accordingly. It is helpful if you can provide the material electronically. If you use SWIA's advance information indexing database, these documents will automatically be given an index number thus removing the need for you to create an indexing system.

Information provided in response to this request will be handled by SWIA in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Scottish Government's Code of Practice on Records Management and Code of Practice on Access to Scottish Government Information.

Lists of service users and carers for surveys and case file reading

There is detailed guidance for the local authority about the information needed for obtaining the lists of those service users and carers who will be included in the sample for surveys and case file analysis. This will be provided to you, as inspection co-ordinator, so that you can co-ordinate the organisation of the surveys using questionnaires and case file readings. It is particularly important that the service user information is

provided on time. You are welcome to contact the lead inspector or SWIA inspection support manager if you are unsure about any aspect of the information requested.

Please ensure that staff understand why their files are being inspected. Given the preparation time scale, staff should have the opportunity to organise their work around the file examination. The inspectors' task will be easier if files are tidy and up to date. Files can always be returned to staff in urgent situations and inspected at a later time in the programme, if necessary. Please consider how files are to be transported to and from the inspection base and stored confidentially during the inspection.

It is important that staff are aware of the possibility that the inspectors may ask to see additional files on an ad hoc basis while they are on sites. This is not intended to catch them out or to indicate particular concerns about the quality of work done by individual workers or teams. In many cases, this will be the fieldwork file but it may be that the files of specialist workers or service providers are also relevant to the inspection.

If you have an electronic case file system you will need to discuss with the SWIA inspection support manager how they can access this and whether a member of your staff may be needed to guide them through it. The SWIA support manager will discuss with you the possibility of all files being provided in paper format to assist the SWIA inspection team file readers, but this should not generally be necessary.

Lists of staff for surveys

A list of staff will be required so that questionnaires can be sent to them. Detailed guidance on this will be provided by the SWIA inspection support manager and the SWIA statistician will be on hand to answer any subsequent, specific enquiries.

Sending sensitive information to SWIA

At Appendices 1 and 2 you will find extracts from the Scottish Government guidelines that SWIA is bound by in relation to marking and transmitting sensitive information. We ask that you bear these rules in mind when sending any sensitive information to us.

SWIA's advance information indexing database contains a field for you to complete to identify any sensitive documents.

File reading in the authority

A team of file readers will scrutinise a selected number of case files before the on-site fieldwork visit. This will normally take up to 5 days. It would be helpful if a room with tea and coffee could be provided in the authority's offices for the file readers to work in, and if arrangements could be made for the files to be locked away. The local authority will be asked to provide about 5 or 6 local file readers to assist in the task. Numbers will be confirmed with the lead inspector at the first planning meeting. Local file readers being involved in this has real benefit for both the local authority and SWIA.

Planning the group meetings, visits and interviews with stakeholders

Following discussion with the SWIA inspection support manager, you will, as the inspection co-ordinator, be asked to plan a programme of group meetings, visits and interviews, during the two weeks on site. Details of this programme are set out in Section 14 of the *Performance Inspection Handbook* (available online at www.swia.gov.uk). It is essential that planning the programme begins as soon as the inspection begins.

Introductory meetings in the local authority

We will wish to provide briefings to elected members, the chief executive, the senior management team, staff and other key stakeholders about the performance inspection either at one of their regular meetings or at specially convened sessions. How these groups are organised will be a matter for local determination. It is an opportunity to give an outline briefing, introduce the members of the inspection team and engage in debate about some of the key issues within the authority emerging from inspection activity in the pre-fieldwork phase.

Introductory group meetings with stakeholders

These are likely to include:

- elected members and senior managers;
- the social work service management team and staff;
- partner organisations; and
- service users and carers.

The purpose of the meetings is to enable these groups to outline in broad terms what they regard as the key issues for social work services. If requested to do so, the inspection team can provide a list of potential agenda items for the meetings with partner organisations and the service users and carers. It is usual for two inspectors to attend each meeting.

Fieldwork programme of visits by the inspectors

The inspection co-ordinator is also asked to plan a programme of visits by the inspectors in the first week of the fieldwork so that they can:

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

The inspectors 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.) Some degree of informality is appropriate. Inspectors may wish to prepare for visits, for example, by reading service information leaflets, recent inspection reports and other available written information.

When visiting teams and 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 the services being offered – 45 minutes;
- a meeting with staff (not including the manager) – 30 minutes; and
- a meeting with the manager – 30 minutes.

Each team may wish to provide some background information such as an outline of the work they do, staffing structure, budget, etc., a SWOT analysis and copies of the operational plans.

Involving service users and carers

a) Individual interviews

The local authority takes responsibility for arranging interviews between service users, carers and inspectors, once these have been agreed by the SWIA team. The inspection team can provide a sample letter to service users for use by the authority and there is a guide for them about inspections. We expect to visit and follow up a number of service users and will identify some additional cases, to allow for a certain amount of drop out. If necessary, the lead inspector will provide you with a list of other people involved in the selected cases who are to be interviewed (for example, the case manager and their line manager).

We will be happy to make home visits to service users and carers, in the evening if necessary. It would be helpful for you to schedule 45 minutes for each service user and to ensure adequate interpreting /

advocacy / personal assistance is available for the service user to make their contribution as effective as possible. There is a shared responsibility in respect of any health and safety issues that may arise.

b) Focus groups with service users and carers

We will wish to consult with a range of users and carers and will be guided by you about appropriate groups locally or arrangements for setting up particular meetings. Clearly we will wish to consult with the breadth of service users and carers but will also need to identify local priorities or services that have been subject to a recent reconfiguration. As an outline guide, the groups selected may include:

- looked after children (including care leavers);
- children in need (including young carers);
- mental health service users;
- older people;
- learning disability service users;
- people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments; and
- parents of children with disabilities.

Please invite a full range of service users. For example, a group of older people would need to have representatives who use day care domiciliary care, short breaks, etc.

It would be helpful if you could provide a list of people you expect to attend each meeting. Please keep the meetings to a reasonable size. Eight to twelve is helpful. Advocates and helpers should be arranged as necessary. You will want to make sure that service users and carers are comfortable and in a position to make their views known. Their expenses should be covered by the local authority.

Other council departments or partner organisations

The inspectors will want to interview representatives from other council departments or partner organisations such as voluntary and private sector organisations. Many of the points made in the preceding section will apply but the following specific points should be kept in mind:

- ensure that representatives know the nature and focus of the inspection. They will need sufficient notice for them to undertake any necessary preparatory work or consultation. Organisations may wish to consult with their own staff to gain accurate and up to date information prior to review;
- you will be asked to nominate relevant organisations in your areas, particularly from the voluntary sector. Discuss the matter with the organisation in question, to ensure a willingness to contribute; and

- if your council engages with the independent sector to provide services specifically related to the inspection, inspectors will want to interview representatives of the organisation involved. This will be in addition to examining your own arrangements for contract compliance or service agreement monitoring.

Information to staff

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

- Make sure all staff understand the nature and focus of the inspection.
- All staff who are to be interviewed should be provided with a copy of the relevant inspection leaflets (supplied by SWIA and available on the SWIA website: www.swia.gov.uk).
- Check that staff know when and where their interview or group meeting will be held and how long it will last. If possible, please make sure that they know the name(s) of the inspector(s) conducting the interview. Fieldwork time scales are usually tight, so punctuality is important for all those involved in interviews, including the inspection team. Delays may well impact on a number of other staff.
- Inspections will involve group interviews as well as individual interviews. Ensure that staff are informed if they are to join a group interview and, if possible, advised who else will be in the group.
- Ensure that staff know why they are being interviewed. Senior managers are likely to be clear about this but operational staff may not be. If the interview is related to the file sample, social workers and team managers should understand that they will be interviewed about the particular case and about their general awareness of other areas such as policy and procedures. Where possible, files will be available for them to consult.

Organising the main fieldwork programme

The fieldwork programme is an essential part of the inspection of your council. It is important that the programme is accurate and representative. An inaccurate or incomplete programme may well increase staff anxiety and frustration as well as reducing the effectiveness of inspectors.

Organising the fieldwork programme must start at the first planning meeting with SWIA.

The points listed below should be borne in mind when completing the programme:

- if you delegate the detailed programming to another officer, they should have sufficient authority to complete the task;
- where possible, complete the first draft programme by the deadline agreed with the lead inspector. If difficulties arise, advise the lead inspector as soon as possible. The first draft often needs amendment so it is important that there is sufficient time to effect changes;
- try to minimise travel. Arrange for all staff at a particular office to be seen on the one day. Please avoid arrangements that require inspectors to travel back and forth to the same location on the same day;
- if it is necessary to visit a number of locations in a day, plan for the time involved. You know your council's geography and how long it takes to get around. If parking close to the office is not available, build in extra time;
- please avoid repeat bookings for individual staff. For example, if the same team leader is involved on two or more cases, one interview is usually sufficient – but this should be programmed for after the social workers for that case have been interviewed;
- avoid over-programming. Two interviews per day per inspector should be the norm but more can be negotiated, if required. Inspectors are available for evening appointments, if necessary. They may well have long journeys to your council's area, so very early starts may not be feasible;
- it is useful to schedule regular brief meetings between the lead inspector and the inspection co-ordinator, perhaps at the beginning or end of the day, to agree or to organise any changes to the programme;
- please consider if the programme as agreed with the SWIA team and the council is representative. If you feel that the programme does not include key staff, then discuss additions with the lead inspector or SWIA inspection support manager. We want to ensure a fair and reasonable perspective on your work, especially from relevant sources of information in the time available for the review, so your suggestions will be welcome; and
- the inspection co-ordinator needs to be ready to adapt the programme during the fieldwork, if necessary.

Practical Arrangements

In order to make best use of the time available, minimise disruption and ensure the safety of staff it is important that practical arrangements are clear. The following is an indicative list of things the local authority co-

ordinator should consider. There may be other items that are specific to each particular local authority:

Accommodation/Admin Issues

- provision of office space for file reading, to hold approx 10 people;
- provision of office space as an inspection team base that can either be locked or have a secure cabinet for confidential storage of inspection papers during the fieldwork;
- Interview rooms as appropriate for fieldwork sessions;
- telephone, analogue sockets;
- photocopying facilities;
- contact points; and
- maps showing inspection team base and / or interview locations.

Security

- car parking arrangements;
- security arrangements;
- passes / entry codes for buildings.

Health & Safety

- advise the inspection team of risks and control measures in any area they will work including evacuation procedures;
- liaise with the inspection support manager about safe manual handling of inspection equipment and materials on accessing/leaving the office space (e.g How far away is the car park?, Are there designated pedestrian walkways?, Are surfaces suitable to use a trolley?, Is a porter available?, Are there stairs to be negotiated?, Is there a lift?)

Refreshments

Tea and coffee facilities in the inspection base would be much appreciated. We will fund these and our own refreshments and meals. However, we will be happy to have tea and coffee in meetings or participate in sandwich lunches where there are lunch time meetings and your local arrangements would normally include these for your own staff.

Conclusion

Thank you for your co-operation in helping to manage the inspection. We hope this guide has assisted. If you have any further queries or there are circumstances specific to your organisation, please raise these with the

lead inspector or the SWIA inspection support manager as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 1

SECURITY MARKINGS

The Protective Marking to be allocated to any asset, including information, will be determined primarily by reference to the practical consequences that are likely to result from the deliberate compromise of that asset or information.

The marks determine the level of protection required and are:

Restricted

The compromise of this information or material would be likely to:

- affect diplomatic relations adversely;
- make it more difficult to maintain the operational effectiveness or security of the UK or allied forces;
- cause financial loss or loss of earnings potential to or facilitate improper gain or advantage for individuals or companies;
- prejudice the investigation or facilitate the commission of crime;
- impede the effective development or operations of Government policies;
- disadvantage Government in commercial or policy negotiations with others; or
- undermine the proper management of the public sector and its operations.

Protect*

The compromise of this information or material would be likely to:

- cause substantial distress to individuals;
- breach proper undertakings to maintain the confidence of information provided by third parties;
- breach statutory restrictions on the disclosure of information;
- cause financial loss or loss of earning potential to, or facilitate improper gain or advantage for, individuals or companies;
- prejudice the investigation or facilitate the commission of crime; or
- disadvantage Government in commercial or policy negotiations with others.

(*PROTECT is not a national security classification unlike TOP SECRET, SECRET, CONFIDENTIAL and RESTRICTED. It has been introduced to cover official information which needs to be protected from compromise of

confidentiality, integrity and availability to a known level of assurance, but for which the measures required to safeguard national security information at RESTRICTED are considered disproportionate. To ensure PROTECT is correctly applied across a very wide range of material, it should be accompanied by a 'descriptor'.)

Descriptors

The following Descriptors to be used with a Protective Mark, where appropriate, reinforce the 'need to know' principle by indicating the nature of the sensitivity involved and limit access accordingly. Descriptors should not be used without a Protective Mark, except for the Descriptor 'Personal'.

- Advice to Ministers - when consulting Ministers on a decision on the development of a new or existing policy or sensitive issue.
- Appointments - concerning actual or potential appointments that have not yet been announced.
- Budget - concerning proposed or actual measures for the Budget before its announcement.
- Commercial - relating to a commercial undertaking's processes or affairs.
- Contracts - concerning tenders under consideration and the terms of tenders accepted.
- Honours - concerning the actual or potential award of an Honour before the announcement of the award.
- Investigation - concerning investigations into disciplinary or criminal matters.
- Management - concerning policy and planning affecting the interests of groups of staff.
- Medical - medical reports and records and material relating to them.
- Personal - material only to be seen by the person to whom it is addressed.
- Policy - concerning proposals for new or changed Government policy before publication.
- Private - information collected through electronic Government services to the public and relating to the individual or an organisation.
- Staff - containing Procedures for Transmitting Protectively Marked Documents
- Visits - concerning details of visits by, for example, royalty, Ministers or very senior staff.

APPENDIX 2

Procedures for Transmitting Protectively Marked Documents

The electronic transmission of material is acceptable **except** where it is classified as CONFIDENTIAL or above. If so classified it must not be transmitted electronically.

RESTRICTED - within the same building

Single sealed envelope to be labelled RESTRICTED with descriptor where appropriate.

RESTRICTED - between two buildings in the same town

When using authorised messenger service, envelope and label procedure as for same building.

When transmitting by ordinary post or commercial courier, use double sealed envelopes, inner one only to be labelled RESTRICTED, with descriptor where appropriate.

RESTRICTED - between towns in the UK

When transmitting by ordinary post or commercial courier, use double sealed envelopes, inner one only to be labelled RESTRICTED, with descriptor where appropriate.