

13. The interim assessment at the end of Phase 1 - Pre-inspection

The information from all aspects of the Phase 1 Pre-inspection is analysed by the SWIA inspection team. This includes examination of the evidence gathered from the advance information, the surveys (of people who use services and carers, staff, partners and stakeholders) and the case file sample.

The SWIA performance inspection team then has an internal meeting to:

- establish the extent of reliable evidence already gathered,
- highlight any gaps in the evidence that need to be filled;
- make a provisional assessment of relative strengths and weaknesses; and
- determine the areas of focus for Phase 2 Fieldwork.

The SWIA link inspector (if appointed) will contribute to this process.

The internal meeting is chaired by a member of the SWIA Management Team and this is a key element in the quality assurance of performance inspections. The chairperson will, as appropriate:

- challenge any interim findings or hypotheses, to ensure that sufficient evidence is available; and
- clarify the additional information needed from Phase 2 Fieldwork.

At the conclusion of the interim assessment, there should be:

- an assessment of the data available and identification of items to be checked, of further information to be sought and of material likely to assist in compiling the final report;
- a set of questions or issues that need to be explored during the fieldwork stage; and
- an appraisal of where the resources of the performance inspection team should be allocated, in order to focus on the key issues for that review and for the local authority.

In deciding the focus for the main fieldwork, the team will aim to present a balanced picture of the social work services. This means following up any areas of significant concern and also areas of good practice. The decision will also take into account any national priorities. The team may look for slices or cross-sections of social work services that are likely to be representative of broader issues.