

15. Introductory meetings before the fieldwork

Before the two weeks on site for the Phase 2 - Fieldwork, there will be an opportunity for a limited number of introductory group meetings. These are likely to include the following group.

- elected members and senior managers within the local authority;
- the social work services management team;
- main partner organisations; and
- people who use services and carers.

The purpose of the meetings is to enable an exchange of information about SWIA inspections. They also enable these groups to outline to SWIA in broad terms at an early stage in the inspection process what they regard as the key issues for social work services. It is usual for two inspectors to attend each meeting. The lay and carer inspectors will decide with the lead inspector the extent of their involvement, although they will usually take part in the meetings with the people who use services and carers.

It is important that all those taking part in the meetings have been given the relevant guides and leaflets:

- Guide to Performance Inspections in Local Authorities (if appropriate);
- Summary guide for elected members;
- Information leaflet about performance inspections for members of the public, including people who use services and carers;
- Information leaflet about performance inspections for staff in social work services; and
- Information leaflet about performance inspections for partners and stakeholders.

If requested to do so, the lead inspector can provide a list of potential agenda items for the meetings. The inspectors will have some prepared questions and they may want to check out information already received. Any of the groups may supply in advance a brief outline of the issues they wish to raise.

It would be helpful if the local authority co-ordinator you could provide a list of people expected to attend each meeting. Please keep the meetings to a reasonable size – eight to twelve is helpful. We recognise that meetings with pre-existing groups may be larger. The meetings will normally last between 1 and 2 hours.