

## **20. Producing the report**

### **Final evaluation**

Each inspection should provide clear, well evidenced and well considered evaluations about performance that can be understood and acted upon by a wide range of stakeholders, locally and nationally.

All these stakeholders have proper expectations that the final evaluations are consistent, based upon rigorous analysis of evidence, robustly tested and demonstrated conclusively in the report made to the local authority.

Further evidence will not be accepted from the local authority from one week after the headline feedback meeting, unless it is specifically requested by the lead inspector.

Once all the evidence has been gathered and assessed, there follows a rigorous process of discussion and challenge both within the inspection team and by SWIA Management Team before the conclusions are shared with the local authority. This is intended to ensure that all evaluations:

- draw on the whole range of qualitative and quantitative evidence;
- derive from correct application of the inspection methodology;
- are rigorously tested against known criteria; and
- are deliberate, fair, consistent, informed and free from bias.

The discussion and challenge process within SWIA is a crucial element in the process of analysis and quality assurance. The discussion will draw on all the evidence from the inspection process.

### **Drafting the report**

The report will be drafted by the performance inspection team with the lead inspector taking primary responsibility for the production of the report. The report will expand on the headline findings presented to the authority in the headline feedback meeting, giving examples of evidence to support the conclusions. The report will not attempt a detailed account of all the evidence and process of the inspection, although the summary results from the surveys and case file sample will be made available to the local authority, usually at the headline feedback meeting.

The report will give evaluations for each of the 10 areas of evaluation included in the performance inspection model, to point up the relative strengths and areas for improvement. The report will also consider the

actions the local authority should build into its action plan. The report will contain specific recommendations (for example, on matters of compliance to statute and guidance) and broader priorities for improvement.

The performance inspection team will aim to send the draft report to the Chief Executive, copied to the Director of Social Work Services within 6-8 weeks of the end of the fieldwork. The performance inspection team will request written comments on matters of accuracy and clarification within 4 weeks of sending the draft report to the local authority.

### **Quality assurance of the reports**

The aim is to produce reports which:

- are clear and straightforward;
- can be understood by all who might read them although they are designed primarily for the local authority;
- make an impact;
- are balanced, fair, accurate and consistent with the evidence;
- convey some of the character of the inspection; and
- give credit where it is due.

Reports constitute a key tool in pursuing SWIA's aim in undertaking performance inspections - to make a positive contribution towards the future improvement of social work services. Reports will contain a mixture of observed and reported facts, opinion, interpretation and judgement. Usually the facts will speak for themselves or there will be a large measure of agreement with what is being said.

On other occasions, evaluations will be more contentious. The performance inspection team will take responsibility for what is written in the report, within a duty to comment in good faith on what has been found. The team will acknowledge what is good and set out what needs to be done better, not avoiding bad news but avoiding sensationalism. Quotes will be used judiciously, ensuring that the views and opinions expressed in them are representative rather than idiosyncratic and properly reflect the overall picture (as corroborated by other sources of evidence).

Reports are public documents with a variety of audiences: people who use services and their carers, politicians and the public, partners and stakeholders, practitioners and inspectors of social work services. Inevitably, they will contain some technical terms or phrases which are widely used within social work services but not elsewhere. Inspectors will be careful not to use expressions which confuse the reader or which may demean people. They will follow good practice in their writing with regard to equal opportunities - as far as possible, language will be gender neutral

and sensitive to ethnic and cultural issues. Reports will be concise, clear and consistent.

### **Structure of the report**

Performance inspection reports are based upon a common template. They have a consistent structure and standard headings, although these may be amended to reflect local circumstances.

Chapter 1	Key findings and recommendations
Chapter 2	The profile of the local authority
Chapter 3	Key outcomes for people who use services
Chapter 4	Impact on people who use services
Chapter 5	Key processes
Chapter 6	Management
Chapter 7	Leadership and direction
Chapter 8	Capacity for improvement
Appendices	As appropriate

In Chapters 3 onwards, the report will:

- give evaluations for each area for evaluation of the performance inspection model; and
- summarise strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Discussions with the local authority**

When sending the draft report to the local authority, the performance inspection team will request written comments on matters of accuracy and clarification. SWIA will arrange one formal meeting with the Director of Social Work to discuss the draft with the local authority and this meeting can be held at any time during the four weeks, as agreed with the local authority.

Comments from the authority must be returned to SWIA within 4 weeks of receiving the draft report. Comments must be channelled through the Director of Social Work Services and should be sent as a single collated written return to the lead inspector. A second formal meeting, again with the Director of Social Work, will be held to discuss the authority's written response.

The lead inspector will consider any comments on the draft report and will:

- correct any factual inaccuracies;
- provide any necessary clarification; and
- attempt to resolve any other matters that do not alter the agreed and moderated findings of the team.

The lead inspector may, as appropriate, request further evidence from the local authority or discuss further with the local authority the substance of the points raised in the report. (NB The local authority has had the opportunity to submit further evidence on its own initiative up to one week after the headline feedback meeting.) The lead inspector may also, as appropriate, discuss with the inspection team and SWIA Management Team any point raised by the local authority which may justify a change in the findings.

The lead inspector and the SWIA Management Team will consider any substantive proposed amendments and representations, making any adjustments considered appropriate to improve and clarify the report.

The lead inspector may not make any significant change to the findings or judgements without the agreement of the SWIA Management Team.

The lead inspector will inform the local authority of changes made to the draft report in the light of the local authority's comments on the draft report within two weeks. It will then send the final draft to the local authority, at the same time as it is sent to the printers.

An electronic version of the final report will be sent to the Chief Executive, copied to the Director of Social Work Services, one week before the publication date. This is for information only.

The report remains confidential until the publication date, which will be agreed with the local authority. While it is accepted that a number of senior elected members and inspectors within the authority will need to have access to the draft report, it should not be circulated or discussed in an open forum.

A presentation to the local authority elected members and other stakeholders will be made by SWIA after publication on a date agreed with the local authority.

A summary leaflet for the public will be produced by SWIA as a separate document after discussion with the Chief Executive and Director of Social Work Services.

## **Challenges to evaluations**

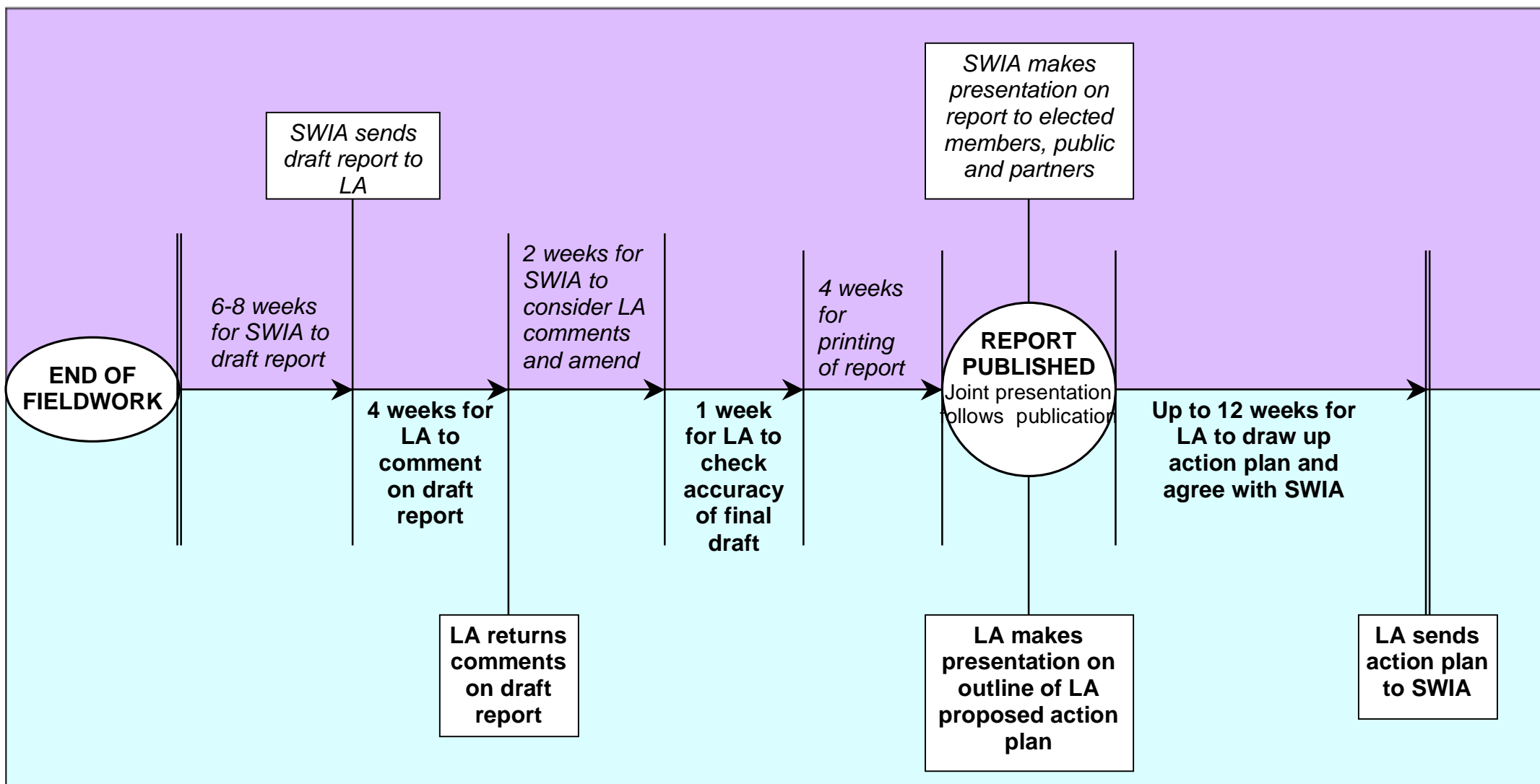
If the local authority challenges any of the formal evaluations of the inspection, the lead inspector will explain to the local authority the basis for the evaluation and consider the grounds given by the local authority for a change. If the lead inspector considers the evaluation should stand, the local authority will be informed accordingly.

If the lead inspector considers (after any appropriate discussion with other members of the inspection team) that there may be justification for a change, this will be discussed with the SWIA Management Team. If they agree the change is justified, the lead inspector will inform the local authority.

## **Further challenge**

If the local authority still does not accept the findings or evaluations of the performance inspection, it is invited to state its grounds for disagreement in writing. The SWIA Management Team will consider these grounds and make a final decision. The lead inspector will inform the authority of the decision and the reasons for it.

### Timeline for Producing the Report \*



\* Meetings between LA and SWIA to discuss the draft report are not set out in this timeline but are specified in the Performance Inspection Handbook