

## **Summary of the inspection methodology for the pilot phase for the Joint Inspections of Services for children 2012-13**

### **1. Notification**

Chief Officers and community planning partners will receive 12 weeks written notice of the actual date of commencement of each inspection. The joint inspection pilots are included within the annual national scrutiny plan for local authorities. The inspection will comprise a total 13 days on-site.

### **2. Briefings**

The Inspection Lead will arrange a series of information briefings 6 weeks after notification to provide chief officers and community planning partners with an outline of the inspection process, key dates and opportunities for regular engagement with the inspection team; provide operational managers with the relevant information, understanding and materials to assist with the planning and preparation for the inspection and to identify a statistically valid sample of children for the core phase.

The Care Inspectorate will supply information material for staff, parents, carers, children and young people about the inspection.

### **3. Integration of care service inspections**

A series of short notice or unannounced inspections of up to 30 relevant regulated care services will be conducted and completed prior to the inspection date and in advance of the start of the inspection. Inspections of care services will be used to obtain evidence of the quality of care services and the experiences of and outcomes for individual children and young people receiving those services. This will not affect any aspect of the inspection of the care service or published report. The experience should not be any different for the provider of the care service, staff or any service user from the usual.

### **4. Scoping**

The purpose of the scoping phase is to analyse a range of data and supporting evidence to reach judgements about the level of scrutiny activity required to make confident conclusions about the quality of services for children. It ensures that any scrutiny activity which follows is intelligence-led and targeted at areas of risk. The team will share the scope and emerging findings during pre-arranged professional discussions.

The scoping phase will be undertaken by a multi-agency team of inspectors drawn from the inspection bodies participating in the inspection. The participants will include relevant "link" or "lead" inspectors/officers who provide support and challenge to services for children in the local authority area under scrutiny, and include inspectors with experience in evaluating the quality of outcomes for service users across a range of services. The inspection lead and depute lead roles will not be carried out by an inspector who has or has recently had a role in supporting and challenging services within the CPP area.

A scoping tool will provide a rationale for the need for more targeted scrutiny over and above the core activities set out below. This tool will be shared at each of the

three phases set out below and provide a focus for discussion with representatives of the CPP and senior /operational officers responsible for the strategic planning and delivery of integrated children's services.

Scoping will be carried out in three phases:

**Phase one** will be undertaken off-site and in advance of the inspection date.

Together, the team will review:

- Intelligence, information and evidence from scrutiny bodies along with a core set of economic, demographic and statistical data
- Available documentation in respect of local community planning arrangements, integrated children's services planning and child protection committees,
- Integrated children's services plan and progress reports
- Service and improvement plans
- Analysis of the findings from up to 30 relevant care service inspections completed in advance of the scoping phase

**Phase two** will be carried over **3 days** on-site and start on the inspection date.

Together, the team will carry out a series of scrutiny events which will include:-

- Review of any existing self-evaluation material and supporting evidence (this is not required in a prescribed form)
- Activity to provide evidence to support evaluative comment on leadership
- Activity which engages young people as inspectors in providing evidence on the effectiveness of involving children and young people and other relevant stakeholders in service development
- Review the findings of an electronic survey of a sample of staff across services targeting "named persons"
- Position statements which will be requested in relation to a number of important service areas – e.g. post adoption support.

**Phase three** will comprise a review of practice by reading the core records of a statistically valid sample of children. A statistically valid sample will be selected from information about all children in the local authority area from each of the following categories: -

- Children on/off CPR in the last year
- Children looked after at home
- Children looked after and accommodated
- Young people entitled to through care and after care services
- Children referred to the local authority for voluntary measures of supervision by the Children's Reporter.

With the exception of cases where children are in need of protection, inspectors will only review the core records held by the Lead Professional or Named Person (where there is no current Lead Professional). The records which will be requested will be those which relate to current and recent involvement extending to the last 18 months and wherever possible inspectors will access electronic recording systems to reduce the need for printing etc.

In cases where children are in need of protection, the core records in health, education, social work and police will be requested. In all other cases, inspectors will only review the core records held by the lead professional or named person.

The inspection team will be supplemented by a number of inspectors with experience

in evaluating the quality of outcomes for service users across a range of services. This will ensure that the task is completed within **5 days**.

The inspection team will have regard to a Code of Practice issued by Ministers for handling confidential information within the joint inspection process.

### **5. Core/Proportionate Phase**

The purpose of this phase is to conduct the essential activity to support confident evaluations about the quality of outcomes for children. Proportionate scrutiny will be carried out in relation to areas of uncertainty about the quality of outcomes for children currently being achieved who remain after the scoping and core phase is completed. This phase will take no more than **5 days**.

Standard activities will include

- a proportionate selection of interviews with children, young people, parents and carers
- a proportionate number of interviews of multi-agency focus groups of staff in 'teams around the child'
- multi-agency or single-agency focus groups of staff around selected themes such as early intervention and corporate parenting
- observations of groups or key processes
- focus groups of young people around particular themes or issues
- site visits
- activity to validate best practice which can be promoted nationally.

### **6. Reporting inspection findings**

It is intended that the emerging findings will be shared through a number of professional discussions which will take place throughout the inspection. At the conclusion of the inspection, the findings will be shared with chief officers and the CPP. The public report and a more detailed record of the inspection findings will be issued within 2 weeks for comment and published after a further 2 week period.

The report will seek to answer the following 3 questions and provide value-adding recommendations to support continuous improvement:-

- *How well are the lives of children, young people and their families improving?*
- *How well do we work together to improve the lives of children and families?*
- *How well do we lead and improve the quality of our work and achieve better outcomes for children and families?*

### **7. Supporting improvement**

The Care Inspectorate will request a joint action plan detailing how community planning partners intend to make any improvements identified as a result of the inspection - this to be received within 6 weeks of the receipt of the record of inspection findings. The Care Inspectorate and its scrutiny partners will consider this action plan and agree any on-going role to build capacity and assist the improvement in the quality of services for children. The aim will be to offer coordinated and targeted support for improvement from the relevant scrutiny /improvement bodies.