

Acknowledgements

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Lessons from the Single Inspection Framework Pilots



Lessons from the pilots of the framework for inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework)

Rapid access to data is essential. Some local authorities do a regular test of how fast they can get their systems up and running for an inspection.

When the inspectors leave

There is a need to communicate the report to all stakeholders early, especially those involved in the inspection.

The pilots felt that there was considerable benefit in writing a companion, contextual piece to accompany the report on publication, addressing the issues raised in the final report.

Ofsted

On publication of the framework (September 2013) there were still issues to be resolved with regard to the full implementation of the framework.

Ofsted will consult further on the specifics of the LSCB review. The final version of the framework will be published early November and the first inspections conducted shortly afterwards.

There will be no further piloting of any aspect of the framework, including the role of the LSCB.

We advise you to check Ofsted's website regularly for any additional guidance provided by them including the soon to be published *Inspector's Handbook*.

Ofsted documents can be found here: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protectio>

Keep In Touch (KIT) Meetings

Keeping a record of the meetings, as well as how they have been followed up, was essential for both the local authorities and the inspectors. By keeping a record of the meetings, it is easier for both inspectors and the local authority to reference back to the meetings later in the inspection.

Directors should play a leading role in the KIT meetings and use strong evidence to debate any emerging hypotheses that inspectors are developing. It was the experience of the pilot authorities that even in the first few days the team will have key lines of enquiry that will need to be debated and either put to bed or remain as an issue for improvement.

Case File Audits

It is expected that the local authority will use its usual audit tool to audit the cases selected. The effectiveness of the audit tool is assessed as well as the audit itself. Local authorities who have had external validation of their own audits are often in a more secure position to do this than those authorities that only audit internally.

Technology and Case Files

Inspectors are not always familiar with the electronic systems you have, so having someone who can guide them at the start is useful. The corporate centre's commitment to making the IT work is also absolutely essential. Some local authorities use a floor walker to help.

Dear All,

In June and July 2013, Solihull and Tameside volunteered to pilot the full Single Inspection Framework, with Islington and Hackney also taking part in partial piloting of specific aspects of the framework. There are several observations that we wished to share with you as you begin to prepare for the inspection.

The inspections are not risk based, so even those with strong results in previous inspections, could be one of the first inspections in November. The framework is for a full three year cycle, every local authority will be inspected under it. As such we recommend that all local authorities should prepare to be one of the first to be inspected and keep a constant state of readiness. Also if you use the preparation well it can form part of your improvement work in the future.

Here is a list of key observations that we hope will help your local authority prepare for and participate in the inspection. We hope this will help you in your approach to the inspection.

This document, a link to the framework, as well as the slides that Ofsted used at the launch of the framework can be found at www.adcs.org.uk/resources/sif.html. We urge you to read all three documents together as they contain a wide range of useful information.

Best wishes and good luck!

Andrew Webb - ADCS President

Mark Rogers - SOLACE President, and Chair, Children's Services Network

Cllr. David Simmonds - Chair of the LGA Children and Young People Board 2013/14

Key issues

The framework is new and is still being interpreted by inspection teams. Your confidence to interpret the framework as a local authority is important and we advise all local authorities to become very familiar with the framework and your own data so there are no surprises once the inspection starts.

Ofsted has been very clear that scope of what they look at in the inspection has widened, that child protection is not the only focus of the inspection. The impact of early intervention in improving children's lives and preventing long term neglect and poor outcomes is hugely important.

The way we deliver services has changed significantly over the last few years, and you need to be clear how you are going to demonstrate how the structures you have in place are making a difference to children's lives.

Providing a written overview, at the beginning of the inspection, about your local authority, background data and context will be useful to inspection teams as they will not then have to take further time to find this out.

Your IT effectiveness and support is critical to the success of the inspection. From the outset you will need to be able to rapidly identify files for the team, who will then want to be able to use your electronic systems.

A self assessment, against the criteria in the framework, would provide a strong starting point for identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Child level data and Annex A

Ofsted provides guidance and a template for Annex A. You will need to keep it updated on a regular basis and use it to support your own self-assessment. This should be built into your own regular performance monitoring.

The Programme

The involvement of members of staff in the inspection process is a positive way to highlight areas of good practice or strengths, so preparing for this in advance will help when the inspection actually takes place.

Inspectors are looking for outcomes that are better than what one could normally expect, making more of a difference to children's lives – the programme is your chance to highlight how you are doing this.

Staff need to be confident in their approach to interviews, if they have not been interviewed before they may need guidance and preparation on what to expect. One way of preparing for this is to carry out regular observations of practice and regular external audits of work to allow staff the opportunity to develop their own skills.

Preparing staff to have, on standby, a couple of case studies of their own work and the impact of their work on the journey of a child, was seen as a key support tool for preparing for interviews.