

Joint Area Reviews

getting the best result from your JAR

What is the Joint Area Review?

From September 2005 separate inspections of different services for children and young people will cease. The inspections currently carried out include inspections of local education authorities, local authority social care functions for children, Connexions service, area provision for students aged 14-19, Children's Fund programmes, and the youth service. These will be replaced by a Joint Area Review (JAR) that will inspect and make comprehensive judgements about the collective impact of local services for children and young people aged 0 –19 years. The JAR is the Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted) new process for assessing how well you are meeting the needs of children and young people in your area.

JARs provide for a comprehensive evaluation of joint service contributions to Every Child Matters Outcomes. They will focus on the overall contribution services, in any given area, make to improvements in the life experience of children and young people

What's Included in a JAR?

Jars will include assessment of:

- The provision of day care
- Residential care
- Youth services including Connexions
- Social services and relevant healthcare services
- Youth offending teams and other elements of community safety and juvenile justice services
- Family support including the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

It is essential for authorities to prepare well for these new processes. Your authority should understand - better than the inspectorates - its own strengths and weaknesses. That understanding, fully developed prior to JAR processes, is likely to lead to a much more productive involvement for your



authority and to much better outcomes for your children and young people.

How Can OLM Help You?

OLM recognise that to make a real difference, consultancy services must be sustainable, and that any improvements made by external consultants must ultimately be realised and carried forward by you.

We can work with you to design bespoke consultancies that will not only help you to get the best result out of your JAR but that will also enable you follow up actions described in your action plan, ensuring that the process of improvement is thoroughly embedded in your organisation and aligned with the inspection timetable.

Benefits:

- Baseline where your Department and partner agencies are now
- Know in advance what the inspectors will pick up and put in place action plans to improve areas of weakness
- Work better with interagency partners to anticipate potential issues and implement solutions
- Ensure your systems and records can deliver the right information to the right standards
- Provide a dry run for CPA and identify issues that need corporate resolution

Through our work with inspectors and with several local authorities we have developed significant expertise in preparing to get the most out of a Joint Area Review. Here are some of the ways in which we can help you do the same:

Case file audit

We will help you audit your case files to select the 100 for the JAR's Case Tracking element.

Case Tracking

You will be required to submit details of 100 cases (30 Looked After, 30 Child Protection, 30 Children in Need and 10 who were assessed but didn't require a service.) The inspectors will select 10 from this list to scrutinise in detail focussing in part on the involvement of all agencies.

We will help you select 100 using the case file audit and in liaison with your colleagues in other agencies.

Consulting (staff & key stakeholders)

We will help your staff prepare for the interviews they will face with the inspectors. We will also help those working with the ten cases selected by the inspectors prepare for the questionnaires they will be asked to complete.

Self assessment

We will help you carry out a trial self assessment ahead of the real thing, using the JAR framework. This will help you to identify strengths and weaknesses, risks and opportunities towards identifying service improvements that are likely to be required.

Consulting (young people and their families)

We will help you prepare a record with examples of all the relevant consultation that has taken place in your area. We will also help you prepare for the questionnaires that the inspectors will want to be sent to the 10 children and their families or carers.

Analysis of local performance indicators

We will help you analyse your performance across the relevant indicators, identifying where an explanation is required and the direction of travel.

"Self-assessment is an on-going, integral feature of the planning, review and improvement cycle for children's services authorities and their partners. Self-assessment for JAR and APA acts as a continuing working tool and is not completed for inspection purposes alone."

From JAR Guidance Notes

About OLM Consulting

OLM's consultants have improved performance in number of authorities, and have assisted managers and staff in the lead up to inspections to achieve better results and better outcomes for children.

OLM's offers a range of highly experienced children's services consultants; some former directors of Children's Services departments, others former assistant directors of children social services, many have recent practitioner experience, some have experiences as SSI/CSCI inspectors. Many began their careers as front-line social workers. They all work on a day to day basis in social services and Children's Services departments, and understand the challenges and pressures that face staff at all levels in the organisation today.

