

THE NEW INSPECTION REGIME – A DIFFERENT CULTURE

Andrew Reddish

Project manager – Benefits (Technical)

Audit Scotland

THE BFI INSPECTION REGIME

Professional, good expertise, thorough & authoritative

- > A significant burden on LAs
- > Lengthy reports > many recommendations
- > Performance Standards
- > Some LAs were never inspected

But GB benefits services' performance did improve

AUDIT SCOTLAND'S APPROACH

Based on LA duty to continuously improve services

- > Complementary to the BV and financial audit
- > Risk based
- > Proportionate
- > All LAs will receive a risk assessment
- > No scoring

But, our work must enable the DWP SofS to exercise powers of direction in extreme cases

THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- > Self assessment – 2 weeks
- > Examination of available evidence – 1 week
- > On-site visit to ‘fill in the gaps’ – 1 week
- > Draft and QA risk assessment report – 3 weeks
- > Send to LA to agree facts – 1 week
- > Send to CE asking for response – 4 weeks
- > Consider adequacy of response – 1 week
- > Notify CE of outcome and copy docs to DWP

THE FOCUSED AUDIT PROCESS

Only if an LA is unable to reduce risks identified

- > Two benefits auditors visit LA – 1 week?
- > Draft report to the Accounts Commission with recommendations – 4 weeks
- > Accounts Commission publishes its response to the report which is copied to DWP SofS

INFORMATION CONSIDERED

- > DWP HoBOD statistics
- > SPI performance
- > NFI performance
- > Information from appointed auditor (subsidy)
- > Internal/external audit reports
- > Self assessment report + supporting docs.
- > Interviews with HB managers

RISK ASSESSMENT REPORTS

- > Introduction
- > Executive summary
- > Aims of the service
- > Meeting the needs of the community
- > Delivering outcomes
- > Providing value for money

PROGRESS SO FAR

- > 1 pilot and 5 risk assessments completed
- > 2 currently in progress
- > Another 5 planned to end of December
- > Estimated maximum of 18 risk assessments per year (depending on number of focused audits required)

EMERGING ISSUES

- > Variable standard of self assessments
- > The delay from site visit to issuing reports
- > Generally well received so far, but we must be seen to add value
- > A need to review all processes with internal & external stakeholders in 2009
- > Its an ambitious programme

PREPARING FOR A RISK ASSESSMENT

- > Spend some time now preparing a draft self assessment which can updated regularly
- > Be honest in your self assessment
- > Action plans must be SMART but be realistic
- > Work with benefits auditors; they can contribute to your efforts to continuously improve

IS THE CULTURE RIGHT?

- > Anything we should stop doing?
- > Anything we should start doing?
- > Anything we should be doing better?

ANY QUESTIONS?

areddish@audit-scotland.gov.uk