



# Joint area review: enhanced youth inspection

Summary information for local areas

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**Better  
education  
and care**

This paper is a summary for local areas of the detailed guidance for heads of youth service on the enhanced youth inspection process (HMI 2659)

**Of particular interest to:**

Local authority youth services and other statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with young people.

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All

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## Introduction

Ofsted's current framework for youth service inspections was launched in January 2004. It reports upon three key aspects of achievement, curriculum and resources and management. The framework makes reference to, and links with, the five Every Child Matters key outcomes. Youth inspections allow Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to 'inform the Secretary of State of the national picture of the quality of youth services and advise on the effectiveness of the local authority in fulfilling its duty to provide a youth service.' It has been agreed that where a service has not been inspected under the new youth framework, an enhanced coverage of youth service provision will be accommodated within the joint area review (JAR). This paper sets out the summary arrangements for the enhanced youth service inspection. Further details are contained in the 'Head of Youth Service' briefing paper.

The enhanced youth inspection will mirror as far as possible, the principles agreed for the JAR. In particular it is understood that:

- the JAR is the primary inspection regime. The youth service inspection will be an integrated element of the JAR
- the approach will be proportionate and differentiated. Fieldwork will be limited
- inspectors will draw from the youth service self-assessment and data as far as possible
- the JAR key lines of enquiry will, where practical, inform youth service inspection fieldwork
- all stages and timings will match those of the JAR.

For local authorities, the intention is to:

- reduce the burden of inspection by avoiding duplication of meetings, evidence requests and activities to gather evidence
- harmonise recommendations for improvement for local children's services, whilst making specific references to the youth service where appropriate
- provide a separate public report on the findings of the youth service inspection.

## How will it work?

1. **Notification:** the JAR indicative programme published on the Ofsted website will identify those local authorities where an enhanced youth inspection is required. Local areas can nevertheless assume that if the youth service has not been inspected in the current round (from January 2004 onwards) that a JAR enhancement will take place.

## What will local authorities have to do?

2. **Consider the framework:** youth services are judged on the basis of the *Local authority youth services - a framework for inspection* (September 2004) which can be accessed at:  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3723>
3. **Complete a self assessment:** the youth work self assessment is in a similar format to that of the JAR. Youth services are asked to grade their performance in respect of the three key framework aspects of achievement, curriculum and resources and management. The self-assessment also provides an opportunity for services to provide an evaluative commentary on contributions to the five outcomes and grade their performance for each area. It is recognised by inspectors that youth work will contribute variably to the Every Child Matters outcomes.
4. **Provide limited service-specific documentation:** for example the youth service plan if it is not part of the council's corporate plan; the service curriculum plan; staff development and performance management arrangements and so on. There will be no need to duplicate documentation made available for the JAR. Ofsted stresses the need for heads of service to be selective in presenting key and succinct evidence. Evidence will normally be in the form of a CD rom with appropriate hyperlinks.
5. **Provide a list of youth service activity:** this should include all the youth service activity taking place during the first fieldwork week. Youth service managers are asked to highlight areas of work which are in the neighbourhood study area; considered to be representative of good practice; and/or which links to the five outcomes.
6. **Make arrangements for the fieldwork programme:** for example providing details about the location and times of the activities selected for observations and making arrangements for a limited number of service specific meetings, for example with full and part time staff, with voluntary sector workers and with young people.

## The stages of inspection

7. **Analysis stage:** this will enable inspectors to determine which aspects of the youth service are 'sound' and which require fieldwork and to what extent. Information will be shared between inspectors and discussion will ensure that there is no duplication of observations or meetings between the JAR and youth service inspection.
8. There is a presumption that all enhanced youth inspections will include observations of youth work sessions but in proportion to the outcomes of the analysis. The range will extend from a block of 8 to 10 youth work sessions to a

block of 16 to 20 observations. The Lead Youth Inspector will provide a briefing at the end of this period indicating where further evidence is needed.

9. **Fieldwork week one:** this week will accommodate the bulk of the youth service inspection activity and observations, including the Neighbourhood study, and most service specific meetings.

10. **Fieldwork week two:** under normal circumstances this week will accommodate any 'combined' youth service/JAR related meetings, allow to any further follow-up of key lines of enquiry, enable the exchange of evidence and JAR team meetings and begin the initial collation of evidence. An initial feedback on the findings of the enhanced youth inspection will be provided at the end of this week.

11. **Reporting arrangements:** a separate youth inspection report will be written giving grades, strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for development. The revised report format will provide the dual function of reporting on the youth services contribution to the five key outcomes whilst at the same time, meeting the requirement to answer the question 'How efficiently and effectively does the local authority ensure the provision of a high quality youth service that meets the needs of young people?' The report will be published and formal feedback provided at the same time as the JAR.