



# QA Process

Challenging  
Inspection Reports in  
a Constructive Way



# Background

- 15 years local government, to Chief Executive
- 25 years as Managing Partner of an international consultancy practice
- PA Member; Audit & Inspection Board Chair
- Peer Inspector - for Northants and Herts
- Peer Member of QA panel for first tranche of inspections
- Other peer work for various PAs



# Inspection process

- The team and their preparation
- The Inspection itself
- Daily and final debriefs
- Draft report
- Internal review meeting
- Draft report to the PA
- PA's response
- QA panel and the final report



# The preparation stage

- PA member and PA officer
- Full members of the team
- Detailed understanding of what a PA actually does
- Must ensure they fully participate in the preparation stage and fully understand **and challenge** the messages received, both at the round table and the scene setting



# The Inspection itself

- PA member and PA officer
- Full members of the team
- Detailed understanding of what a PA actually does
- Must take a lead on "role" matters
- Must be robust in challenge
- Need a strong relationship with the PA



# Daily/final debriefs

- PA member/officer involvement
- Inspected PA should request this
- Daily debriefs should provide opportunity for "clarifications"
- Hot debrief should be a conversation
- Indication of all likely AFI's
- PA expects report to match hot debrief



# Draft report

- Drafted by the lead inspector
- All members of the team should be involved
- Differences resolved or formally noted
- Absolute clarity on "who does what"
- Distinction between process and outcomes
- Query references to "good practice"
- Avoidance of instruction eg "must"
- Clarity on strengths and AFI's



# Internal review meeting

- A back room process
- Team leader and .....
- Revisions agreed



To PA, with response sheet

- Only one bite at this cherry
- Involve all relevant people
- Errors of fact - quite frequent
- Differences of opinion - many
- Misunderstanding of role and function
- Misunderstanding of the evidence
- Scoring perceptions - *always*



# Errors of fact

- So much data, so check everything
- Dates - how long, since when ....
- Names - people, bodies, committees
- Figures - especially ££££
- Simply provide a correction, with evidence where appropriate



# Role and function of PA

- Errors in all of the first tranche of reports
- Even with reviews and member/officer involvement
- What does the PA do?
- What does it delegate to the force?
- What is direction and control?
- How does an authority influence a force?
- Essential to provide simple clarification - stated clearly, evidenced where appropriate



# The evidence provided

- Only inspectors keep meeting notes !!!
- Minutes which don't include relevant reports
- Debates on topics simply recorded as "noted"
- Use of language which isn't understood
- Response as simple as possible, couched in terms which help the reader (QA panel) reach the "appropriate" conclusion
- Criticism undermines the team leader



# QA panel

- Panel leader (AC) and HMIC
- Peer "observer"
- Supporting team and minute taker
- Team leader (usually alone)
- Draft report
- PA responses, with notes from team leader (only)
- (Not the hot debrief - yet ...)



# Panel process - 1

- Intro by panel leader
- Brief overview from Team Leader
- Work through the draft report, para by para
- Only consider those paras with PA responses
  - unless there is an obvious link to another
- **Agreed** responses - changes noted
- **Disagreed** responses - debated
- For each theme - strengths, AFI's, score



# Panel process - 2

- Many references to the assessment themes and criteria
- When all responses considered, final consideration and conclusions
- **BUT**
- Some other concerns, not in PA responses, raised by panel members
- Numerous challenges on detail and accuracy
- Time allowed - 3 hours
- Time taken - .....



# Final report

- Sometimes significant changes
- Differences from the original
- No further revision stages  
(except for a Judicial Review !)
- Publication
- Press release (s)



# The first tranche

- Ten inspections, very different reports
- Different levels/types of challenge
- Errors - but often overlooked
- Differences of opinion
- Role and function
- The evidence
- The scores
- **Inspectors are unused to challenge**

# NYPA



North Yorkshire Police Authority