

## Case study

**Client:** Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

**Project:** Assessment and Development Centres for Inspection staff

**Dates:** September 2002 – September 2004

**Carried out by:** Derek Bell, Ian Fleming, Zee Jacob, Stuart Smith, Peter Hyde

### Requirement

BFI had reviewed the way its inspections of local authorities were carried out in order to make them shorter. This resulted in a new inspection process and new job descriptions for inspection staff. BFI wanted an independent assessment to be undertaken of how well existing staff were equipped to play their new roles. The assessment was intended to identify both strengths and development needs.

### What we did

The work was carried out in three phases for the three levels of inspection staff. We developed a skills framework for Inspection Managers and designed a two day Assessment Centre for groups of eight which involved a complex mix of exercises and activities. Participants did a self-assessment before the Centre and were also assessed by their managers. The Centre resulted in a report which combined observational feedback from the Assessors (a mixture of externals and senior line managers trained by us) with the self assessment and manager assessment. Thereafter, participants' managers held a review and action planning session with them. We provided a short training session on debriefing and coaching skills, and a Development Options Guide, to support this.

The process for the next level of inspection staff was very similar, but for the more junior members of inspection teams (who were generally less experienced and in a role which was itself developing) we designed a Development Centre. The key differences were that participants received 360 degree feedback collected before the Centre and were given immediate behavioural feedback during it; they also took responsibility for producing their own summary of the feedback they received (including their own reflections).

### Outcomes

The Centres were experienced as challenging and stressful, although much less so by those attending the Development Centres. They contributed to an improvement in BFI's performance and improved feedback from its customers.