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Committed
to Excellence



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

The Adult Learning Inspectorate

There are at least five million adult learners in England. They are either people who opt, after the statutory school leaving age, to train at work or those over 18 years who return to some kind of education or training. Their learning is funded wholly, or in part, by the Learning & Skills Council or the Employment Service.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) is an independent body charged by government to inspect the adult learning that is funded in this way. The Secretary of State for Education and Employment requires us to report on the quality of adult learning and the standards reached by these learners. We were established under the provisions of the *Learning & Skills Act 2000* and began inspections in April 2001. Our board has nine members, chaired by Nick Reilly.

As Chief Inspector of Adult Learning, I lead a team that will grow to 120 full-time inspectors, 12 inspection managers and 850 associate inspectors. Our inspectors are home-based and live all over the country. In addition, I have five directors and over 80 staff and managers who support the inspectors in their work, based at our business centre in Coventry.

We inspect each provider of adult learning that receives public funds. Increasingly, we will also inspect private training provision. A report, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each provider, is published on our website – www.ali.gov.uk – after every inspection. The Chief Inspector's Annual Report, which summarises the year's findings, is published each summer.

Integrity and fairness are fundamental to the way we work and we keep the interests of the individual learner at the heart of everything we do.

The following pages provide an outline of our remit, our aims and our objectives. We also explain briefly the processes of inspection and reporting: the *Common Inspection Framework*, available on our website, offers a more detailed guide to the inspection and self-assessment process. It is this document that provides the framework against which all providers of post-16 publicly funded learning are inspected.

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I hope you find this introduction to our work helpful.



David Sherlock
Chief Inspector of Adult Learning

Our role

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REMIT AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ALI

The ALI's main functions are set out in the *Learning & Skills Act 2000*. Under this Act, the ALI has responsibility for the inspection of:

- further education for people aged 19 or over, which is funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) or a local education authority (LEA)
- training provided wholly or partly on employers' premises for people aged over 16, which is wholly or partly funded by the LSC
- training funded (through the Employment Service) under the Employment and Training Act, including the New Deals
- training offered and funded by employers, at the invitation and expense of the employer.

In addition, the Secretary of State has specified the following functions for the ALI in 2001-2002:

- inspection of Learndirect, operated under the auspices of Ufl
- inspection of learning in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- inspection of adult and community education
- inspection of vocational provision overseas, in support of the work of the British Council
- area inspections of provision for 16-19 year olds, in support of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
- production of thematic or survey reports from time to time.

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WORK

Underlying all our functions, the ALI's fundamental role is:

- *promotion of excellence in learning*
- *raising public confidence in the standards of learning*
- *raising the profile of lifelong learning*
- *improving the coherence and consistency of adult learning*

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Our aims

KEY OBJECTIVES

Our main aims are to:

- assess the standards achieved in adult learning
- advise the Secretary of State on standards in adult learning
- contribute to raising standards of adult learning by working in partnership with the funding bodies and providers which hold the responsibility for quality improvement
- report on the extent to which the financial resources made available by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the Employment Service (ES) to providers of education and training are used in a way which represents value for money
- extend the use of inspection as a means to establish and raise the quality of privately-funded learning in England and, where appropriate, overseas.

Partnerships

To achieve these aims, we work closely with a wide range of other organisations, in particular forging a strong and productive relationship with OFSTED. Our two inspectorates work together, under the direction of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, to plan, conduct and report on inspections of further education sector colleges in which OFSTED is responsible for inspecting the work of 16-19 year-olds.

Both the ALI and OFSTED work alongside the LSC, supporting the LSC's strategic role in planning, funding and improving the quality of post-16 learning up to university level. The ALI ensures that inspection practice is co-ordinated with the LSC's Quality Improvement Strategy and works closely with the LSC's Quality Improvement Division.

We also work with the Connexions Service, which provides advice and support for young people, and with the Employment Service, to enable it to meet its commitment to counteract social exclusion and to help unemployed people return to work.

Through inspection and reporting, the ALI also helps to ensure that training provided through the New Deals is effective.

OUR APPROACH

We focus on achieving all these tasks by behaving with integrity and fairness, making sure that we are always...

- *open and responsive in our dealings with providers and the public*
- *winning the respect and trust of those we inspect by the validity of our judgements*
- *conducting inspections with courtesy and civility*

Standards

Our key standards of work – and the more detailed objectives that go with them – can be summarised as follows:

- carry out inspection of publicly-assisted provision that is rigorous, fair and objective
- require a practicable minimum of specially-prepared paperwork from providers which are inspected
- produce reports that are clear, accurate and written in plain English
- publish an inspection report within 12 weeks of the end of each inspection
- publicise examples of good practice
- work productively with partner organisations to achieve continuous improvement
- provide inspection services, on a cost recovery basis, at the request of other governments with which the British Council works in partnership
- provide inspection services, on a cost-recovery basis, of training purchased by employers for their staff, at the request of the employers
- maintain close links with the Department for Education and Employment.

The way we work

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Strong values, based on our culture of integrity, are crucial to the way we work. That's why we are committed to supporting key government values and policies, including:

Raising skills

We work with the funding bodies, the National Training Organisations (NTOs), representatives of employers and trade unions to raise levels of skill at work, improving productivity and competitiveness

Social inclusiveness

We work with the Employment Service, the LSC and other partner organisations to promote learning provision which meets the needs of all learners, especially those aiming to return to employment or to improve their basic skills

Raising aspirations

Our close work with providers, the funding bodies that are responsible for securing continuous improvement and other partners encourages all learners to give of their best and to influence all who offer learning opportunities to aspire to the highest international standards

Equality of opportunity

We also work closely with organisations such as the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission. Because we aim to be an exemplary employer ourselves, we have our own policy on equal opportunities and uphold equality of opportunity through all aspects of our work.

At the same time, through inspection and reporting, we aim to promote equal opportunities in training and education

Sustainable development

We strive to be environmentally responsible. We ensure that we achieve sustainable development in all our activities, especially in the areas of property management, procurement and transport. We also seek to contribute to urban regeneration and to help overcome rural deprivation

BUILDING

OUR REPUTATION

In short, the Secretary of State expects us to demonstrate our independence by developing a reputation among providers and partner organisations for fairness and for forming and reporting our judgements 'without fear or favour'

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Openness

The ALI has adopted – and is building on – the code of practice on open government, reflecting the Nolan principles of propriety. We make sure our decision-making processes are transparent and open to public scrutiny, as far as the need for confidentiality allows, and we give our staff opportunities to express any concerns about improper conduct. We also consult widely with providers and other partners on our aims, performance and activities

Public service

We've adopted the aims of propriety, confidentiality and impartiality for the activities of our inspectors and other staff and for our conduct in inspections. We're committed to publishing our inspection reports promptly and to providing a fair and transparent procedure for the conduct of appeals, in keeping with high standards of public service. We also publish a review and complaints procedure which is held in common with OFSTED and which includes the option of independent adjudication.

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Summarising the Inspection

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The inspection process breaks neatly into four stages:

Self-assessment

- Every provider produces an annual self-assessment report and submits it to either the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) or the Employment Service (ES), as appropriate
- Self-assessment reports are made available to the inspectorate electronically

Inspection

Before the inspection

- Each provider is inspected once every four years

Providers selected for inspection are notified by registered post 6-12 weeks before the inspection date

- A full-time inspector leads each ALI inspection and either associate inspectors or other full-time inspectors, or both, make up the rest of the team. Providers are invited to nominate a senior manager to join the inspection team
- All inspectors are subject or occupational area experts
- All inspections are conducted using the *Common Inspection Framework*
- A planning meeting is arranged by the lead inspector with the provider's nominee
- The inspection team is selected to reflect the numbers of learners, the types of provision (using the standard 14-area inspectorate classification – see page 10) and the variety of locations in which they learn

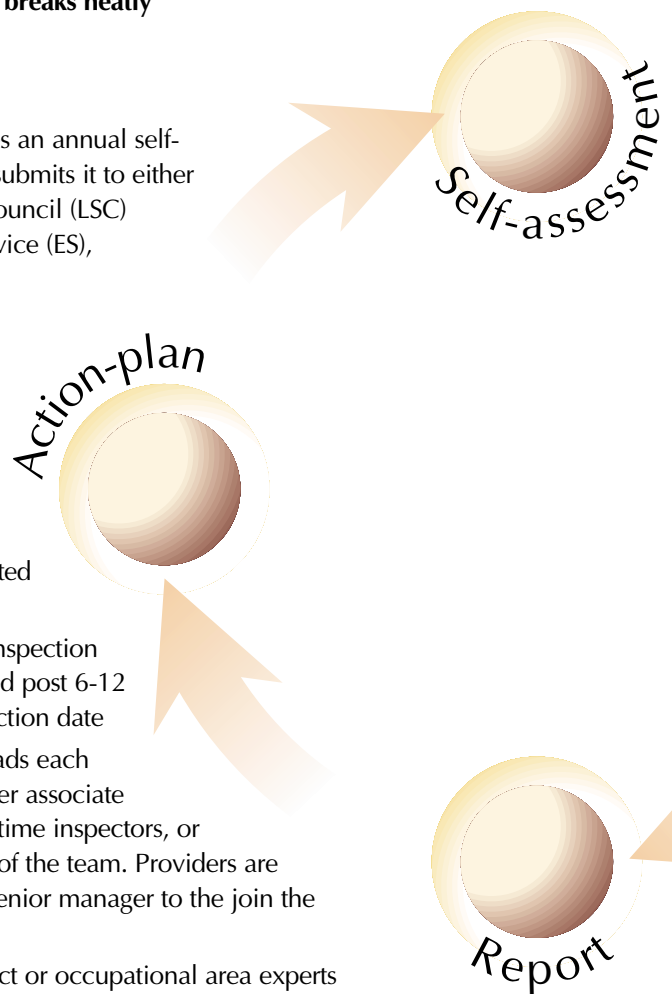


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Cycle

During the inspection

- The inspection team examines the ways in which learning is planned, delivered and assessed, how learners are guided and supported and how effectively equality of opportunity is promoted. Learners' achievements are analysed
- Inspectors interview learners, trainers and teachers, employers' staff and providers' staff. They visit places of learning, both formal and informal, and examine learners' work.
Documents relating to the learning process and assessment are examined, along with quality assurance documents and data
 - Each area of learning and the provider's leadership and management are assessed
 - Inspectors assess the quality and accuracy of the provider's self-assessment process and report on its match with their findings
- Judgements of the strengths and weaknesses of each area are formed by inspectors who award summary grades on a 5-point scale. Grade 1 represents outstandingly good provision and grade 5 represents very poor work
- Throughout the inspection and at its end, inspectors tell the nominee and other staff what they find. Staff from the appropriate funding body are invited to the final feedback session
- The nominee provides information, challenges any emerging judgements that appear insecure and provides additional evidence when necessary

Report

- The lead inspector, with the help of the team, writes a report at the end of the inspection that is brought back to the provider for accuracy checking before it is edited and published

- Inspection reports are edited in Coventry for consistency and for plain English style
- Inspection reports are published on the ALI's website within 12 weeks of the end of the inspection
- After inspection, the provider produces an action plan that is submitted to the appropriate funding body. It addresses the weaknesses highlighted by inspectors and shows how the provider intends to reinforce its strengths
- Providers' views about their inspections are sought after inspection and they are invited to comment on and grade each element of the process and the work of the team
- Where aspects of the provider's work are grade 4 or 5, re-inspection of these areas will be conducted within two years of the first inspection
- Where at least a third of the occupational or subject areas are graded 4 or 5 or where leadership and management are unsatisfactory, the Chief Inspector will normally require a total re-inspection of the provider, also within two years

Action plan

- The primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision lies with the provider
- So now, after the inspection, it is the provider's job to submit to the LSC or ES a plan detailing how it intends to respond to the inspection findings
- The LSC/ES is responsible for assessing the appropriateness of the action plan and for monitoring its implementation
- Further guidance on the inspection process is available on our website and through training events for nominees. If you have any urgent questions, please contact enquiries@ALI.gov.uk

What we inspect

Several million people start new programmes of learning each year in more than 3,000 organisations which receive government funding. Learning programmes are classified into 14 areas to make comparisons easier between providers of similar work.

Area 1: Sciences and Mathematics

Mathematics and sciences, including physics, chemistry, biology and geology. Environmental and conservation studies.

Area 2: Land-Based Provision

Agriculture, horticulture, equine, animal care, gardening, fishing, environmental practice, chain-saw use and landscaping.

Area 3: Construction

Construction trades and crafts, including electrical, mechanical and engineering services. Surveying and highways, and DIY.

Area 4: Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing

Marine/aero/automotive, car/cycle maintenance, chemical, energy, electrical/electronic and mechanical engineering. Manufacturing, processing, coating, mining, quarrying and extraction.

Area 5: Business Administration, Management and Professional

All aspects of business, administration and management, legal, estate agency, accounts, economics, assessor/ teacher/trainer awards, marketing, quality assurance and personnel staff.

Area 6: Information & Communication Technology

ICT users, engineers and technicians, programming/software website design. Software use, DTP and keyboarding skills.

Area 7: Retailing, Customer Service and Transportation

Merchandising/ distribution and packing, import and export, warehousing, call centres, fork-truck driving, air/marine/ road/rail and goods transportation.

Area 8: Hospitality, Sports Leisure and Travel

Hotel/restaurant reception, food and beverages, catering, cooking. Travel and tourism, leisure services, sports coaching, exercise and fitness, outdoor activities, recreational sports and games. Travel agency.

Area 9: Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Hairdressing, beauty therapy, massage, massage for sports, therapeutic techniques.

Area 10: Health, Social Care and Public Services

Care/health/dental, counselling, parenting, pre-retirement, bereavement, assertiveness, playwork, public/emergency services.

Area 11: Visual and Performing Arts and Media

Art and design, crafts, ceramics, carving, dressmaking, embroidery, weaving, photography. Performing arts/theatre, music, dance. Journalism, media/ video/radio/printing, design and technology. Arts management.

Area 12: Humanities

General studies, history, genealogy, sociology, psychology, geography, law. Religious studies/comparative religions, philosophy, classics, ancient languages. Access to HE.

Area 13: English, Languages and Communications

English, communications, writing, French/ German/Italian/Spanish etc, community languages, EFL.

Area 14: Foundation Programmes

Employability programmes, foundation studies, life skills, basic skills, key skills, ESOL, citizenship, programmes for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Return-to-work and vocational skills.

We at the ALI are playing our part in achieving a much broader set of objectives, aiming to create tangible benefits for learners or employees, providers and employers.

Benefits to the Employer

- Availability of recruits with sound basic skills
- Improved calibre of recruits with higher occupational skills
- Increased confidence in the quality of post-16 and work-based learning

Benefits to the Provider

- Increased confidence in the quality of post-16 and work-based learning
- Guidance on standards and quality
- Information about good practice

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Benefits to the Learner

- Raised standards of individual learning
- Improved employability
- Extended equality of opportunity – in learning and employment
- More information about good opportunities for learning

Benefits to the Country

- Improved employment skills
- Higher standards in all sectors of learning provision
- Better basic skills
- Easier comparison between learning opportunities available in different settings: at work, at college, in the community

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Want to find out more?

Take a look at our website

The Adult Learning Inspectorate has a website on which you can find out more about our work, including a list of all the organisations we have inspected and those which are due to be inspected later this year. There are also summaries of all recent published reports.

If you'd like to see the full report of any training provider, this is easily downloadable from the website, in Portable Document Format.

You will find us at <http://www.ali.gov.uk>. Alternatively, if you have a general query, send us an email: enquiries@ali.gov.uk

Key contacts

If you have a detailed question or need to contact our senior team, then please contact us at our Coventry base.

The Directorate of the ALI is made up as follows:

David Sherlock
Chief Inspector & Chief Executive

Keith Marshall
Director of Inspection (Planning)

Denis McEnhill
Director of Inspection (Reports)

Coral Newton
Director of Business Services

Nicky Perry
Director of Inspection (Communications and Quality)

Lisa Yeoman
Director of Inspection (Human Resources)

Where we are

The ALI will move into a purpose-built new office at Coventry Business Park in spring 2002.

In the meantime, our temporary postal address and telephone contact details are:

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Third Floor
101 Lockhurst Lane
Coventry
CV6 5SF

Tel. 0044 (0) 870 240 7744
Fax. 0044 (0) 870 242 1444

Our permanent postal address, from spring 2002, will be:

1410 Spring Place
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