

# Support and challenge for residential provision in further education colleges

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This guidance sets out Ofsted's approach to supporting and challenging further education colleges where their residential provision has been judged inadequate or to require improvement as set out in the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of residential provision in further education colleges* and *Conducting inspections of residential provision for learners aged under 18 in further education colleges*.

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## Introduction

1. This guidance explains how Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or social care regulatory inspectors (SCRI) will support and challenge further education (FE) colleges with residential provision that is judged as inadequate or to require improvement at inspections from January 2015 in accordance with the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of residential provision in further education colleges*<sup>1</sup> and *Conducting inspections of residential provision for learners aged under 18 in further education colleges*.<sup>2</sup>
2. From January 2015, any college residential provision found to require improvement or to be inadequate will have an improvement visit. This visit will assess the college's progress against the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report and will usually take place within six months of the inspection. It will also help to determine when the next inspection might take place.
3. Residential provision in FE colleges will normally be inspected within three years of the last inspection. However, if the residential provision has been found to require improvement or be inadequate following an inspection from January 2015, the next inspection will take place within two years from the last inspection. The improvement visit will help to determine when, within that two-year period, it might be reinspected based on the risks assessed.

## Strategies for support and challenge

4. Ofsted will provide bespoke support and challenge for provision that is not yet judged to be good.
5. All FE colleges have a responsibility to ensure that their provision is of a good quality for their residential learners. Senior managers, together with the governing body, as appropriate, must determine the exact actions to take to help the college improve and access any necessary support. However, inspectors will support and challenge the college in this process.

## Improvement activity - the range of options

6. The following is an indicative range of support and challenge strategies that inspectors may choose to employ and/or recommend when visiting a college. The strategies are not mutually exclusive and the list is not exhaustive.

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation schedule for the inspection of residential provision in further education colleges: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-schedule-for-the-inspection-of-residential-provision-in-further-education-colleges>

<sup>2</sup> Conducting inspections of residential provision for learners aged under 18 in further education colleges: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-inspections-of-residential-provision-for-learners-aged-under-18-in-further-education-colleges>

Inspectors may identify other activities that suit the specific circumstances of the college. The range of options may include:

- inspectors meeting with link governors to explain, using Ofsted evidence, how the governing body can assist in ensuring that a college improves to good
- establishing stronger links with other colleges to learn from their strengths, as well as to work together on shared issues
- inspectors offering to arrange a visit for senior leaders and governors to another college
- a meeting between the inspector and other staff at the college to review progress against agreed action plans and/or to share good practice
- meetings with groups of residential learners.

## Carrying out improvement visits

7. Where a college has been judged to require improvement or be inadequate at the most recent inspection, an inspector will contact the college's principal to offer a visit, usually, within six months of the publication of the inspection report.
8. The inspector will agree with the provider a suitable time for an initial telephone conversation and the first onsite improvement visit. The inspector will:
  - discuss, by telephone or meeting, with the principal or their representative the college's areas of improvement as set out in the inspection report
  - discuss and agree the priority actions that the college will take and the timescales for doing so in order to resolve the areas for improvement
  - agree other means of support and challenge that are deemed appropriate.
9. If the inspector conducting the visit judges that the college is not making sufficient progress, for instance with respect to safeguarding matters, funding bodies may be notified and the reinspection may be brought forward.

## After the visit

10. Within 19 working days of the visit, the inspector will send to the principal the reporting letter confirming the actions required and timescales and any further arrangements discussed at the visit.
11. The reporting letter will not be published on the Ofsted website. However, where inspectors have concerns about poor progress, the letter and appropriate information arising from a visit may be shared with relevant authorities.