



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

GUIDANCE FOR PROVIDERS
ON THE INSPECTION OF **learndirect**

*Interpreting the
Common Inspection Framework*

INSPECTION OF THE UFI'S LEARNDIRECT

Introduction

These guidelines aim to help inspectors interpret the questions in the *Common Inspection Framework* when they are inspecting a hub's provision of Ufi's **learndirect** courses. They do not constitute a checklist. Inspectors should substantiate their judgements with appropriate evidence drawn from a wide range of sources.

Supported on-line learning is the main medium for **learndirect** learning. It enables learning to take place away from institutions and learning centres in venues such as home or the workplace. Ufi makes a promise to learners:

- to offer the time, place, pace and style of learning that responds to their needs
- to give clear information that helps them make the best personal choices about learning programmes and maintain control of them
- to offer learning materials that are relevant to their own work interests and that actively involve them in practical examples and exercises
- to enable them to monitor their progress and record their achievements as they go, not just at the end of a complete programme
- the opportunity, on completion of a set of **learndirect** learning materials, to present evidence of their achievements for credit towards the widest range of nationally recognised qualifications
- easy access to the specialist support they need
- to put them in touch with other people studying the same topics
- to give them the chance to relate their learning to their own longer term ambitions.

Inspectors will judge the quality of learning provided by a hub through **learndirect**. Inspectors will focus on learners' achievements and evaluate the help and support learners receive through a hub.

Each area of learning, where appropriate, will be graded. If it is not possible to grade individual areas of learning an overall grade will be given. Leadership and management will be graded. Contributory grades will be given for equal opportunities and quality assurance.

Where the inspection of **learndirect** involves learning centres which have themselves been subject to an inspection in the preceding 12 months, evidence from that previous inspection will be taken into account by inspectors during the current inspection.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate will work with other inspectorates to ensure that the formal inspection of **learndirect** is always undertaken by inspectors trained in such inspections.

Language of Ufi's learndirect

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to **learndirect**.

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to learndirect	
Provider	Hub	The organisation responsible for providing the learndirect educational service through its network of learning services for publicly funded learners.
Learner	Learner	Any person who is on a learndirect course. They may access the course through a learning centre, an access point, at home, or at work.
Teacher/trainer	Learner support	Ufi has defined seven support roles for learners: 1 Information Provider/Access Enabler 2 Initial Assessor 3 Advice and Guidance Provider 4 Learning Facilitator 5 ICT Coach 6 Virtual Online Tutor 7 learndirect Product Champion Roles 1,2 and 3 deliver base level support to get the learner started on a course. Roles 4 and 5 deliver general support to the learner throughout their course and keep records of learner activity. Roles 6 and 7 deliver subject specialist support. All roles may be delivered virtually and may be combined.
Learning goals	Learning goals	These may be credit towards (or whole) nationally recognised qualifications or targets learners wish or need to reach in order to become more employable or to meet personal learning goals. Attainment of goals may be entered in a learning log maintained by each learner (which is confidential to the learner) and learners may receive a certificate recognising course completion. Records of learning goals are also kept by centre staff.
Personal and learning skills	Personal development skills	These may also include skills to enhance employability.

Other terms used for learndirect

learndirect	Ufi's learning services are provided under the brand name learndirect . Learners can follow a wide range of courses, over 80 percent of which are available on-line. The aim is to help learners to study through the Internet, at home, at work, or in one of up to 1,300 learndirect centres
Hubs	Hubs are an association of organisations which make available learndirect educational services through identified learning centres, access points, Virtual Learning Centres (VLCs) and Points of Delivery (PODs). Hubs may operate on a geographical, sector or company basis. Hub operators act on behalf of a hub and contract with Ufi to provide learndirect educational services. Hub operators may be a lead body (usually a college) or a separate legal entity formed for the purpose.
Hub management/steering group	The body which oversees the strategic direction of a hub.
Hub manager	The hub manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of a hub.
Learning centres	If they so wish, learners may follow a course using, if appropriate, the computing equipment in a learning centre. Staff at the centre will help the learner to use the equipment and other supporting material. They will provide base level support and general support when required.
Access points	Access points have computing equipment available to learners and staff will provide learners with base level support.
Virtual Learning Centres (VLCs)	VLCs are operated by hubs and run as administrative learning centres with the same requirements for learner tracking and learner support as other learning centres but the learners registered with a VLC do not formally attend the centre.
Points of Delivery (PODs)	PODs are mobile work stations which can be used flexibly within hubs, although they are mainly targeted at SMEs. Some specially funded PODs are only available to SMEs.
Course	The majority of learndirect courses have notional learning times of between 10 and 30 hours. Some are short 'taster' or 'bite sized chunks' with notional learning times of one or two hours.
Individual learning log	Each learner may use their individual learning log to record their personal details; broad learning goals; the courses taken; the current course being followed and their plans for their future development.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

1. How well do learners achieve?

This section assesses how successful **learndirect** learners are in achieving their learning goals and in improving their personal and learning skills.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- ❑ success in achieving challenging targets, including qualifications and learning goals
- ❑ the standards of learners' work in relation to their learning goals
- ❑ learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential
- ❑ the development of personal and learning skills.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which teachers and trainers:

Common Inspection Framework	<i>In learndirect this means:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>results and retention rates compare well with local and national averages</i> 	⇒ the proportion of learners who complete their learning goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>trends in performance over time show continuous improvement or the maintenance of very high standards</i> 	⇒ continuous improvement in the proportion of learners who complete their learning goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>analysis of added value indicates that learners make at least the progress expected of them</i> 	⇒ that learners' knowledge and skills are at least what might be expected based on their initial level of knowledge and skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>standards are consistently high across the provider's work</i> 	⇒ that standards of learner's work are consistently high and learners demonstrate ability in their use of information technology as a medium of learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>challenging learning goals and targets are achieved.</i> 	⇒ that learning goals are realistic and demanding

and learners:

Common Inspection Framework: Learners	<i>In learndirect this means:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and their potential</i> 	⇒ that learners are making good progress towards achieving their identified goals including using computers as a learning resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>are prepared for effective participation in the workplace and in the community</i> 	⇒ that learners are developing relevant work and/or community related skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>progress to relevant programmes, courses or employment</i> 	⇒ the rate that learners progress to other relevant further learning and/or employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>reach appropriate levels in key skills</i> 	⇒ that learners are developing key skills including computing skills and skills in

	using the Internet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>develop the skills of critical evaluation, research and analysis</i> 	⇒ that, as appropriate, learners acquire skills of obtaining and using information from a range of sources, including the Internet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>develop the attitudes and skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning, including the capacity to work independently</i> 	⇒ that learners are motivated to work successfully, to develop the study skills to enable them to do so and to take responsibility for their own learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>attend regularly and are punctual</i> 	⇒ not applicable

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2. How effective are teaching, training and learning?

This section assesses the quality of specialist and learning centre support to ensure that learner progress is monitored and maintained.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- ❑ how well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course or programme requirements
- ❑ how well learners learn and make progress.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which teachers and trainers:

Common Inspection Framework: Teachers and trainers:	In learndirect this means:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise, at a level consistent with effective teaching and assessment of the course or programme</i> 	⇒ that specialist and learning centre staff have suitable expertise and knowledge of the content of learndirect courses to be able to help and support learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>plan effectively with clear objectives that all learners understand</i> 	⇒ that specialist and learning centre staff are familiar with the learndirect portfolio of courses and are able to help learners to plan their learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>use methods and styles of teaching and training consistent with the aims of their programmes and learners' personal objectives</i> 	⇒ that specialist and learning centre staff use methods and styles of support that are appropriate to individual learners and that enable learners to meet their learning goals and personal objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>challenge and inspire learners</i> 	⇒ that specialist and learning centre staff motivate learners to work on their own and to succeed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>set, use and mark assignments in a way that helps learners to progress</i> 	⇒ if relevant, that learners are given feedback on their work, either online or in person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>with learners, develop individual learning plans, informed by initial assessment, that are reviewed and updated regularly</i> 	⇒ that all learners have an individual learning plan which is amended when necessary. The plan should reflect the results of their initial assessment, particularly the assessment of their computing skills where appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>promote good working relationships that foster learning</i> 	⇒ that specialist and learning centre staff establish good relationships with learners to facilitate support given online and in person

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>present material in a way that is sensitive to issues of equal opportunity.</i> 	⇒ that specialist and learning centre staff support learners in ways that are appropriate to the diversity of learners' backgrounds and cultures
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and the extent to which learners:

Common Inspection Framework: Learners	In learndirect this means:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>acquire new knowledge and skills develop ideas and increase their understanding</i> 	⇒ that learners gain, and are able to apply, knowledge and skills from their learndirect course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>understand what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve</i> 	⇒ that learners understand what they are doing, the progress they are making and what they need to do to make better progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>apply effort to succeed with their work, work productively and make effective use of their time</i> 	⇒ that learners are able to make learning a part of their daily lives, make effective use of their time, and work productively on their own
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>are stimulated and show interest in their work</i> 	⇒ the same

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3. How are achievement and learning affected by resources?

This section assesses the quality and accessibility of the resources to support **learndirect** courses.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- the adequacy and suitability of staff
- the adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

Common Inspection Framework	In learndirect this means:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there are enough qualified and experienced teaching, training and support staff matching the demands of programmes and the range of learners</i> 	⇒ that staff are suitably qualified, have expertise in facilitating on-line learning, and provide prompt responses to learners' questions and requests for help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the professional development of staff contributes to their effectiveness</i> 	⇒ that staff development helps staff to improve their specialist knowledge and skills and their ability to facilitate online learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>specialist equipment and materials are used, including facilities which are relevant to the workplace and which meet current industrial standards</i> 	⇒ that computing equipment and other materials to support learning are of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching, training and learning and support for learners</i> 	⇒ that learning centres, access points and PODs are housed in suitable accommodation and learners find them pleasant places in which to learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>learners have access to learning resources that are appropriate for effective independent study</i> 	⇒ that learning centres, access points and PODs are in locations close to learners' homes or places of work and are open at times to suit learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>learners work in a safe environment</i> 	⇒ that learning centres, access points and PODs meet appropriate health and safety requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>resources are used to best effect in promoting learning</i> 	⇒ that the resources in the learning centres, access points and PODs are readily available and equipment is well maintained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>learning resources and accommodation allow learners with learning difficulties or disabilities to participate fully.</i> 	⇒ that learning centres are easily accessible to persons with physical disabilities and have suitable facilities, where possible, including specially adapted computers, to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities. There is no Ufi requirement for access points to be similarly equipped.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4. How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?

This section assesses the quality of assessment and associated recording on **learndirect** courses. It also assesses how well this information is used to promote and inform student progress.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- the suitability and rigour of assessment
- the uses of assessment in planning learning and monitoring progress.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

Common Inspection Framework	In learndirect this means:
• <i>forms of assessment and recording are suitable for the courses and programmes being followed</i>	⇒ not a hub responsibility
• <i>assessment is fair, accurate and carried out regularly</i>	⇒ not a hub responsibility
• <i>initial assessment provides an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work</i>	⇒ that learners undertake an initial assessment process which helps to inform their choice of course(s)
• <i>assessment is used to monitor progress and inform individual learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further</i>	⇒ if relevant, that specialist and centre staff use the results of assessments to help monitor and support learners' progress
• <i>achievements towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded and accredited</i>	⇒ that learners' achievements are recorded and, where appropriate, are certificated
• <i>assessment information is used to guide course and programme development</i>	⇒ not a hub responsibility
• <i>assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow regulatory body requirements</i>	⇒ if relevant, that hub and awarding body procedures for assessment, verification and moderation are applied consistently
• <i>those with a legitimate interest, such as employers or parents, are clearly and regularly informed about learners' progress.</i>	⇒ if relevant, that permission from learners is obtained before passing information about them, or their progress, to other parties

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5. How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?

This section assesses how well **learndirect** courses meet the needs and interests of individual learners to improve their skills, knowledge, and employability.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- ❑ the extent to which courses or programmes match learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience
- ❑ how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements, and are responsive to local circumstances.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

Common Inspection Framework	In learndirect this means:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learners have the opportunity to study an appropriate range of courses or programmes, and, where appropriate, achieve suitable qualifications 	⇒ that learners have access to an appropriate range of on-line and other courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the curriculum or an individual programme of work is planned and managed effectively to provide coherence and progression 	⇒ that specialist and centre staff help learners to choose courses to improve their knowledge and skills in their chosen subjects and which could lead to further education, training or employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the curriculum or programmes of work are socially inclusive, ensuring equality of access and opportunities for learners 	⇒ that learners are able to study learndirect courses whatever their backgrounds or abilities, and whether they own a computer or not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learners have the opportunity to broaden their experience through a suitable variety of enrichment activities 	⇒ not applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programmes of work take account of community and employer needs 	⇒ that specialist and centre staff help learners to choose courses which take account of relevant personal, community or employment needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-site provision and resources are effectively integrated to give a coherent programme of learning. 	⇒ that hub, learning centre and access point staff ensure that resources are well used to provide learners with a coherent learning experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal requirements in relation to religious education and collective worship are fulfilled where they apply 	⇒ not applicable

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6. How well are learners guided and supported?

This section assesses the quality of guidance and support **learndirect** learners receive on entry to their courses and during their courses including the quality of support for individual learning and personal needs.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- ❑ the quality of information, advice and guidance to learners in relation to the courses and programmes they are following and their career progression
- ❑ the diagnosis of, and provision for, individual learning needs
- ❑ the access learners have to relevant, effective support on personal issues.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

Common Inspection Framework	In <i>learndirect</i> this means:
• <i>support arrangements are planned and managed coherently</i>	⇒ the same
• <i>impartial guidance enables learners to choose the course or programme which is right for them</i>	⇒ the same
• <i>careers education and guidance are effective in guiding learners towards opportunities available to them when they have completed their studies or training</i>	⇒ if relevant, that hubs and learning centres are able to direct learners to effective careers guidance
• <i>procedures are in place for recognising poor punctuality, non-attendance and poor performance early and for taking appropriate action</i>	⇒ that staff monitor learners' progress, and keep in touch with learners to check that they are still studying and to encourage them to complete courses within their planned timescale
• <i>induction programmes enable learners to settle into work quickly, to understand their rights and responsibilities and the demands of the course or programme</i>	⇒ that learners receive an induction which includes an introduction to computing resources and learning online
• <i>individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and learners receive effective additional support throughout their studies or training</i>	⇒ the same
• <i>learners have effective personal support to help them to complete their course or programme, including access to specialist support services</i>	⇒ the same
• <i>guidance and support are sensitive to equality of opportunity</i>	⇒ the same
• <i>partnerships with other providers and relevant agencies involved in advice and guidance are effective</i>	⇒ the same, where such partnerships exist

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

This section assesses the quality of leadership and management of **learndirect** hubs and partner learning centres/access points in relation to the delivery and improvement of high quality education. Aspects assessed include quality assurance arrangements, value for money, management board responsibilities, and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

To answer this question, evaluate:

- ❑ how well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high quality education and training
- ❑ how effectively, through quality assurance and self assessment, performance is monitored and evaluated and steps taken to secure improvement
- ❑ how well equality of opportunity is promoted so that all learners achieve their potential
- ❑ where relevant, the extent to which governors or other supervisory boards meet their responsibilities
- ❑ how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

Common Inspection Framework	In learndirect this means:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by staff, including subcontractors and work placement providers</i> 	⇒ that hubs set appropriate strategic objectives, targets and values and that these are fully understood by all staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>demanding targets for retention, achievement, progression and employment are set and met</i> 	⇒ the same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the quality assurance arrangements are systematic and informed by the views of all interested parties</i> 	⇒ that hubs systematically implement quality assurance arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>rigorous self-assessment leads to identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement</i> 	⇒ that hubs and learning centres assess strengths and weaknesses, and make good use of action plans to bring about improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>priorities are supported through responsible financial management</i> 	⇒ that the financial management of hubs is sound with clear objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>staff understand and are fully involved in the organisation's quality assurance arrangements</i> 	⇒ the same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the information needs of managers and other staff are met and management information is used effectively to the benefit of learners</i> 	⇒ that managers and staff have access to accurate and current data and use these effectively

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>performance management, staff appraisal and review is effective in improving the quality of provision</i> 	⇒ the same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there are explicit aims and values on equality for all that are reflected in the provider's work</i> 	⇒ that hubs and partner learning centres have explicit aims for promoting equal opportunities which are reflected in their work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there are effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment</i> 	⇒ that centres have effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment, especially online, or the inappropriate use of computing facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there are effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints</i> 	⇒ the same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>governors or other supervisory boards effectively oversee the provider's strategic direction, and regularly monitor the quality of provision and their own performance</i> 	⇒ that hub management/steering groups oversee the strategic direction of their hub effectively, monitor the quality of its provision and review their own performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the 'best value' principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are applied in securing resources and services</i> 	⇒ the same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>efficient and effective use is made of resources</i> 	⇒ the same.

Suggested sources of evidence:

- ◆ observation of learners and their work
- ◆ observation of learning and reviews of progress
- ◆ observation of learning centres and access points
- ◆ observation of additional support, induction, initial counseling and careers advice
- ◆ interviews with learners
- ◆ interviews with staff including managers and tutors
- ◆ learner records
- ◆ achievement data
- ◆ individual learning plans
- ◆ records of initial assessment
- ◆ learning materials
- ◆ staff CVs including qualifications and experience
- ◆ staff training records
- ◆ hub strategic and operating plans
- ◆ induction material
- ◆ specialist support services information
- ◆ agendas and minutes of management meetings
- ◆ appeals and complaints policies, procedures and reports
- ◆ learner feedback questionnaires, surveys and analysis of responses
- ◆ self-assessment reports
- ◆ equality of opportunity policies and procedures

