

# Choosing a nominee

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- We invite one of your senior managers to join the inspection team.
- This person is called the nominee.
- The nominee represents your organisation during inspection.

## Introduction

Choosing a nominee is the first and the most important decision you will make during the inspection process. This booklet gives you advice on choosing the right person for the job.

You can find out more about what the nominee will do in the booklet **An introduction to the role of the nominee** which offers a brief overview of the nominee's role throughout inspection. More detailed hints and tips for the nominee can be found in the guidance material covering each stage of the inspection process.

## What is a nominee?

We believe that inspection is something that we do **with** providers rather than to them. It is a collaborative, transparent process in which there should be no surprises.

For this reason we invite one of the provider's senior managers (known as the nominee) to join the inspection team, to hear our evidence, to challenge our emerging judgements and to have every opportunity to provide additional information.

The nominee plays an important role in ensuring that the inspection team has access to all relevant evidence and that the inspection runs efficiently and effectively.

The nominee has two principal responsibilities:

- to represent the organisation
- to manage the inspection process within the organisation.

As the inspection progresses, the lead inspector will keep the nominee informed of emerging issues and the evidence used to support inspection judgements. The lead inspector needs to be sure that, through the nominee, the organisation recognises the picture inspectors are painting and is able to correct any misinterpretations. The nominee is invited to attend meetings of the inspection team but does not contribute to decisions on grading.

## Who should be the nominee?

The smooth running of the inspection depends to a considerable extent upon who is appointed as the nominee. When carried out effectively, the role of the nominee brings great benefits to the process of inspection for both the provider and the ALI. It is a challenging role.

### What level of seniority is required?

The job title will vary according to the type of organisation, but the nominee will generally be at senior management level. In many cases, the nominee will be the training or education manager, quality manager, head of department or the managing director. Although seniority matters, having the right mix of experience and personal skills is as important.

### What knowledge does the nominee need?

The nominee needs to know your organisation inside out. They need to be familiar with every part of your operation from top to bottom, not just its management. They need to understand the organisation's structure and culture and be familiar with all the programmes you offer.

Inspectors will not expect the nominee to know all the answers and it is quite acceptable for another manager or member of staff to meet inspectors and supply any missing information. The most important thing is that the nominee knows who to ask and where to get the information inspectors need.

### Does the nominee have to be the person who wrote the self-assessment report?

It is not essential for the nominee to have written the self-assessment report, but they will need a thorough knowledge of what is in it and why. Inspectors will scrutinise the self-assessment report and look to the nominee for clarification. It is important that the nominee understands and believes in the self-assessment report.

#### To play their part in the inspection team to the full, nominees should be:

- in a senior position in the organisation with immediate access to the chief executive
- knowledgeable about the details of their organisation's work and its quality assurance procedures, including self-assessment
- trusted by senior and junior colleagues alike, with their full and unqualified support
- confident enough to help inspectors reach accurate judgements, whether or not they are favourable
- empowered to take such actions as are necessary to ensure the smooth running of the inspection.

**This is a demanding set of requirements.**

# What skills will the nominee need?

## Project management skills

The nominee needs to be a good organiser. It is their responsibility to manage the inspection process on behalf of the organisation. They will need to help plan the inspection, making sure that all the necessary arrangements have been made before the inspectors arrive. During inspection they will need to co-ordinate the activity of inspectors, staff and learners. They should also plan contingency arrangements as learners are bound to go sick, be on holiday or leave their portfolio on the bus. An efficient, well-organised nominee can make a huge difference to the smooth running of the inspection.

## Influencing and negotiating skills

The nominee will need to be diplomatic and persuasive, both with inspectors and their own colleagues. They need to be able to put forward a well-argued case, together with the evidence to back it up. They should also be able to make pragmatic judgements about when to challenge inspectors' findings and when to accept what they are saying.

## Change management skills

Once the inspection is over, the nominee should become a key agent for change. More than anyone else in the organisation, they will now understand what needs to be done. Making those changes happen and taking the organisation with them, is a key part of the post-inspection role.

### The nominee needs to:

- be a good organiser
- be diplomatic and persuasive, both with inspectors and their own colleagues
- be focused on the inspection, not side tracked by other duties or stresses
- be able to make things happen.

# What personal qualities does the nominee need?

## Articulate

The nominee must be able to express themselves clearly and concisely. They need to be able to articulate complex ideas and arguments both to inspectors and their own colleagues. The best nominees work with inspectors to come up with the right form of words to describe a significant organisational issue.

## Confident

The nominee will be the sole representative of your organisation at meetings with a team of inspectors. You need to choose someone who will not be intimidated by this and who will be prepared to challenge inspectors' findings. If they think we are wrong they need to tell us so and be tenacious about finding the evidence that proves it. They need to be assertive but not aggressive. They may also need to feed back difficult messages to the organisation's senior managers or other staff.

## Objective

Most nominees are passionate about what they do. They believe absolutely in the value of learning and are able to empathise with the learner's experience. However, the nominee must be able to put their feelings to one side, listen to what inspectors are telling them and consider it objectively. Remember, inspectors are assessing the quality of the training or education you offer, not your business itself.

## Able to cope with stress

Inspection can be a stressful time, particularly for the nominee. While the inspection team is with you, activity will be intensive and may involve long hours. The nominee needs the flexibility and stamina to cope with these demands, remaining calm and focused. They may also need to manage the anxieties their colleagues experience. Inspectors recognise the tensions that can arise during inspection and will always try to keep these to a minimum.

## Open and honest

The nominee must have complete integrity. They will be entrusted with the workings of the inspection team and of their own organisation. It makes life easier for everyone if the nominee is open and honest about the organisation's weaknesses or any obstacles that the inspection team might encounter.

### The nominee needs to:

- be articulate, confident and able to cope under pressure
- be objective and act with complete integrity
- care passionately about their learners and the learning experiences they offer
- look at the provision objectively and take on board any negative judgements
- discuss issues openly and calmly.

# How much time will the nominee need to spend on inspection-related activity?

## Before the inspection

They will be involved in detailed planning with the lead inspector. They may also need to prepare data (unless you choose to allocate this responsibility to another member of staff). We strongly advise that they attend one of our nominee conferences. Time and effort put in at this stage can make all the difference to the inspection itself.

## During inspection

The obvious time commitment is during the inspection. The nominee must be on hand throughout. There will be a lot of activity involved in gathering evidence, arranging visits and interviews. Sometimes nominees find there are times when they do not have anything specific to do, but they will need to be available to deal with any unforeseen events.

The inspection team (including the nominee) will normally hold meetings at the end of each inspection day (although in some types of provision these meetings may be held during mornings). These meetings can be lengthy because it is important that the emerging issues, both positive and negative, are debated and explored in depth.

## After inspection

There will be some follow-up duties such as checking the inspection report before publication.

### REMEMBER

- Do not under-estimate the time commitment required.

### Are there any pointers as to who NOT to choose?

**A weak nominee is one who is:**

- already chosen as the scapegoat for a bad inspection result
- indiscriminately defensive about everything the provider does
- keen to hide weaknesses from inspectors
- reluctant to tell the chief executive any bad news
- simply a reporter who feeds back early emerging judgements to colleagues without taking care to avoid unnecessary alarm
- too new to the organisation to have sufficient breadth of knowledge.

# What support will the nominee require from the rest of the organisation?

## Allocate staff to be available

The nominee has a difficult role to play. Sometimes they can feel caught between the demands of the inspection team and the demands of the organisation.

It is important that you understand the pressure that they will be under from the moment you appoint them. They should not feel as if they are alone. Inspection is about the whole organisation. Make sure they know that you and all the other staff are backing them 100 per cent. They also need to feel empowered. They will have to action things quickly during inspection and need to feel confident about doing so.

## Allocate sufficient time

Make sure they are allocated sufficient time away from the demands of their normal duties. Particularly in larger inspections, the nominee will need someone to do the 'running', to make phone calls, change appointments, find evidence etc.

## Access to senior managers

The nominee should be able to discuss what is emerging from the inspection with other senior managers, debating the important issues and keeping less important ones in perspective. In particular, it may help for the nominee to talk to colleagues following the daily feedback sessions rather than taking it home and dwelling on it all night.

### The nominee will need:

- time away from their normal duties to deal with inspection-related activity
- the support of other senior colleagues.



# The nominee

## Can there be more than one nominee?

The nature of the role means that it would be counter-productive to have more than one nominee. It is important that the inspection team hears a consistent voice, and that there is no confusion. On national or very complex inspections, however, the nominee may choose to work through regional deputies to collect evidence and discuss emerging judgements.

## Once we have chosen a nominee, can we change our mind?

It is possible to choose a different nominee, but a late change may disrupt the smooth running of the inspection.

## What if the nominee leaves or is ill?

Once your inspection dates have been agreed, they cannot be changed. It is important to have stand-by arrangements to provide a substitute if your nominee is unavailable.

## What is the nominee conference and why it is so important to attend?

We would strongly recommend that your nominee attends one of our nominee conferences. These events are provided free of charge to help nominees prepare for inspection. It is an opportunity to talk to inspectors and to hear the 'do's and don'ts' from a nominee who has already experienced an inspection. The conference is a chance to network with other nominees from organisations which are due to be inspected.

### Nominee conference

- We provide nominee conferences free of charge.
- The conference is an opportunity to hear more about inspection, talk to inspectors and meet other nominees who are due to be inspected.

## Where can we get more help and support?



- You can find out more in the booklet ***An introduction to the role of the nominee.***
- Your lead inspector will be in touch with you in the next few weeks and will be able to answer any questions you have.

## AND finally

There are many benefits to having a nominee on the inspection team:

- Your organisation is involved in each step towards judgements, contributing information and offering your perspective.
- Surprises are avoided.
- It cements the links between self-assessment, action planning, independent inspection and the continuous improvement process.
- Nominees often become quality champions within their organisation.





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