PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

During the inspection

This booklet gives an overview of what happens during the inspection and covers the period from the start of the inspection to the publication of your inspection report.

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INSPECTORATE

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

During the inspection

- As the nominee, you are part of the inspection team.
- Make sure everyone knows what is happening.
- Set up good communication systems within your organisation.
- Ensure you fully understand the judgements that are being made.

Introduction

This booklet is designed to take you through the inspection visit, from the inspectors' arrival on the first morning through to their departure after the feedback meeting on the final afternoon of the inspection. It covers meetings, inspection activities, and the process of determining judgements and grades based on the evidence available during the inspection period. It also gives an overview of what happens after the inspection visit.

You will find it helpful to look at the ***Overview of the inspection process*** wallchart in the ***Planning and preparing for inspection*** section of this toolkit. This sets out the inspection process from beginning to end. It has been designed to help you in your preparation for inspection, so that everyone will be aware of what is happening during the various stages of the inspection process.

Continue to use the wall planner in the ***What you need to do*** section of this toolkit.

Support

If you get stuck or would like to talk through any areas there is additional help and support:

- Once your lead inspector has been allocated, usually a month after notification, you will be able to contact them for advice.
- Opportunities to ask questions and discuss specific issues are available at the nominee conferences.
- If neither of the above sources is suitable then you can get advice by contacting our Inspection Planning Helpline on **02476 716640** where you can leave a message and the most appropriate person will return your call.

We aim to produce secure and consistent judgements, based on the *Common Inspection Framework*, a thorough review of inspection evidence and a standardised inspection procedure. Careful post-inspection moderation and editing procedures ensure that the report text reflects the grades given and the key strengths and weaknesses identified, and that these grades and judgements are consistent with those given to other providers.

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This booklet follows a question and answer format with lists of where you can find further information and checklists of what you need to do.

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The first morning

What is the initial team meeting?

- The start of the inspection.
- The first time the full inspection team, including the nominee, meets.

Inspections begin with an initial team meeting in the base room at the start of the first inspection day. The initial team meeting is the first time that the full inspection team meets. Some inspectors may have worked together on previous inspections, but it is unlikely that everyone will know everyone else.

In some large or national inspections, inspectors may not start inspecting locally on the first day and so the arrangements for the initial team meeting may differ. Your lead inspector will discuss this with you.

Apart from the lead inspector, this will be the first time the inspection team will have visited your premises. If you are providing car parking spaces, it is helpful if they can be clearly indicated. Reception staff should be able to give clear directions to the base room, or be available to take inspectors to it. Inspectors will wear Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) identity badges but you may also wish to provide your own visitors' badges. Base room security will be important, given the equipment and confidential information it contains. If you are providing keys for inspectors it is helpful if they are available when we arrive. Traffic and weather permitting, we try to arrive in good time for the initial team meeting, so it may be worth having your reception point open at least half an hour before the start of this first meeting.

Who should attend?

- The inspectors.
- The nominee.
- Other staff may attend.

The key people who attend the initial team meeting are the inspection team, which includes the inspectors and the nominee. Talk with your lead inspector if you think other staff should attend this meeting. This is not a time for the inspection team to meet all the staff unless you are a very small organisation.

What happens at the initial team meeting?

- Your lead inspector introduces the inspection team.
- The nominee, or a senior manager, gives a brief overview of the organisation and any particular issues it may be facing.
- Arrangements for the inspection are confirmed.
- Any queries are raised and discussed.

Your lead inspector begins by welcoming and introducing the team, including the nominee, and reminding people of the arrangements for this inspection. The nominee or a senior manager usually gives a short presentation, of about 10 minutes, to the inspection team about the current context of your organisation and any particular issues it may be facing. As nominee you will be invited to advise the team of any particular sensitivities, for example ill health or bereavement, which inspectors will need to be aware of when talking with staff or learners. You can outline any travel or domestic arrangements, for example health and safety issues and the arrangements for refreshments.

What happens after the initial team meeting?

- Inspectors are introduced to their link contacts for the inspection.
- Inspectors begin gathering and evaluating evidence.

The nominee arranges for inspectors to be introduced to key members of staff who will be their contacts during the inspection. Inspectors then begin the process of gathering and evaluating evidence. Area of learning inspectors will probably start their schedule of visits, while leadership and management inspectors will start their schedule of meetings and begin reading the relevant documents in the base room. It may seem strange, especially on large inspections, that the whole team is assembled for the initial team meeting and then the room is suddenly empty. Inspectors work to a tight schedule and it is important that we make the most of our time with you. Later in this booklet we describe the arrangements for keeping you in touch with the emerging findings as the inspection evolves.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***An introduction to the role of the nominee*** booklet in the ***Choosing a nominee*** section of this toolkit
- ***How can the nominee keep in touch with the inspection?*** (page 14)
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information | **Things to do**

- ❑ Talk with your lead inspector about who should attend.
- ❑ Prepare a short presentation about the current context of your organisation and any issues it may be facing.
- ❑ Make arrangements for meeting the inspectors.
- ❑ Make sure the base room is ready.
- ❑ Have all the travel arrangements and maps ready, as well as any additional paperwork your lead inspector has requested.
- ❑ Have key contact staff available to meet with the inspectors.

The base room

What happens in the base room?

- This is the inspectors' office during the inspection.
- The initial team meeting, daily team meetings and the grading meeting normally take place in the base room.

The base room is the inspectors' office during our visit to you. Because of the confidential nature of much of the information in it, access to the base room is normally restricted to members of the inspection team, including the nominee.

Inspectors work in the base room, writing up notes, reading documentary evidence and drafting report sections. We also talk informally with each other to clarify ideas, check judgements and share evidence. It is an important venue for inspectors to share ideas with, or to seek guidance from, your lead inspector, and for your lead inspector to test emerging inspection themes. These meetings are informal and usually spontaneous. Nominees need not feel excluded from joining or initiating them.

The base room is also the place where we normally hold our initial team meeting, our daily team meetings and the grading meeting on the final morning of the inspection. Some of these meetings may take place in other rooms if the base room is unsuitable. Discuss this with your lead inspector. Most inspection teams will also want to use a flip chart.

On small inspections, individual meetings with providers' staff may take place in the base room, but generally it is better if meetings can be held in separate meeting rooms. Your staff can feel increased anxiety and pressure if they are meeting in a room where other inspectors are present.

Does the nominee need to stay in the base room?

- No - not all the time.
- It does help if you are in the base room regularly.
- Let your lead inspector know how how to contact you when you are not in the base room.

You do not need to stay in the base room all the time but it is helpful if you are there regularly. You will be there for all our team meetings and will find it helpful to be available for inspectors, either to provide them with additional evidence or to clarify with them any points arising from daily team meetings. Life does not stop just because the inspectors are visiting and you will probably have other demands on your time during the inspection period, not least from your own staff. It is helpful if you can keep your diary clear during the inspection period so that you are able to deal quickly with any issues that may arise. If you are not in the base room, please let your lead inspector know how to contact you (either by mobile phone or on an internal telephone extension).

Should we provide lunch?

- No - but it is useful to know what facilities are available.

We do not expect you to provide lunch but inspectors might use any refectory or canteen arrangements. If you do not have a canteen on your premises, it is helpful to let us know of nearby eateries. Inspectors on the main site will probably buy a sandwich and eat it in the base room. Area of learning inspectors will probably refuel on their travels. Inspectors will pay for their own meals, though we would ask you to ensure that tea, coffee and water are available during the day. Please talk with your lead inspector about arrangements for paying for this.

Further information | Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***Planning and preparing for inspection*** booklet in the ***Planning and preparing for inspection*** section of this toolkit
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information | Things to do

- [ ] Make sure the base room is ready.
- [ ] Make arrangements for tea, coffee and water.
- [ ] Have a flip chart available.

Evidence

How do inspectors collect evidence?

- Observing learning.
- Reading provider documents and looking at learners' work.
- Visiting learners wherever they are.
- Meeting with learners, staff, employers, subcontractors and partners.

There are four main ways in which we gather evidence of the quality of your provision.

Inspectors:
- observe teaching and learning in lessons, off-the-job training, assessments or progress reviews.
- read provider documents, policies, procedures, plans, minutes of meetings and so on, and look at portfolios and other examples of learners' work. Some of these, for example the self-assessment report and data tables, will have been been sent in advance of the inspection.
- visit places where learners learn or which have an impact on learning, for example classrooms, workshops, work placements, libraries, resource areas, staff accommodation and so on.
- meet learners, staff, employers, subcontractors and partners. (On some inspections, for example **learndirect** inspections, it may not be possible to meet many learners in person. Inspectors will telephone learners using contact lists prepared by you.)

The inspection, within its standardised framework, is a flexible process that is responsive to issues as they arise. Inspectors may cancel meetings if they feel they have gained a secure evidence base, or request additional meetings if they need more information. These changes should not cause you concern. We are as likely to be following further strengths as pursuing weaknesses. Within the time constraints of the inspection, we will try to give reasonable notice of cancelled meetings or of requests for further meetings. We will do our best not to make unreasonable demands on you or your staff. If you think that inspectors' requests are not reasonable, do discuss this with your lead inspector. We do recognise that employers or partners may feel inconvenienced if we cancel visits to them or meetings with them, so we will try to avoid this. Nevertheless, we need to use our time with you as effectively and productively as possible to ensure a secure evidence base and sound judgements.

Throughout the evidence-gathering period of the inspection, we will have in mind the *Common Inspection Framework* and the seven key questions which form the basis of our report. In particular, we are looking to judge the effectiveness of your provision in meeting the needs of your learners.

What do inspectors do when they visit work placements?

- Observe a planned activity if possible.
- Meet individually with the learner and separately with their supervisor or employer or both.
- See the learner's portfolio of work and any other relevant records.

Inspectors will normally visit work placements as part of a schedule of pre-arranged visits. We would expect employers to be briefed about your inspection and to understand its purpose. Usually, a member of your staff will accompany the inspector to the work placement. If this is not possible, it is important that inspectors have clear directions, including information about car parking and the location of the reception area. Inspectors will advise the employer of their presence on the premises and will wear an ALI identity badge. They will also wear appropriate clothing, for example catering whites.

It is helpful if the visit coincides with some planned activity conducted by either your member of staff or the learner's supervisor. This might be an assessment, a progress review, off-the-job training or some other part of the training process. We would also like to meet individually with the learner and separately with their supervisor. It is particularly helpful if this can take place in some confidential space, for example an office (rather than the middle of a showroom). You may wish to arrange for inspectors to meet other relevant staff, for example the employer or the training manager, if this is possible.

Inspectors will need to see the learner's portfolio of work and any other records of their progress, including initial assessment records and individual learning plans. Learners should bring their own portfolios or folders. Other paperwork may be available at the employer's premises or held centrally at your premises.

Most visits will take about one to one-and-a-half hours, depending on the range of activities and meetings available at the work placement.

What do inspectors do when they observe learning sessions?

- Staff should be briefed that an inspector may visit the session.
- Inspectors need to see a register, an outline scheme of work and a lesson plan.
- Inspectors do not join in with any lesson activities.
- Inspectors make notes during the observation.
- Inspectors will look for opportunities to talk with learners.
- After the observation, inspectors give brief feedback.

In advance of the inspection, your lead inspector may ask you to prepare a draft observation schedule which will minimise travelling time or other delays. This is an advisory document and inspectors are free to deviate from it and look at other learning sessions in other locations within their area of learning. It is therefore important that all staff are alerted to the possibility of a visit by an inspector sometime during the inspection period. On large inspections, for example adult and community learning, inspectors normally use timetables and class lists to prepare their own lesson observation schedule, which is not shared with the provider's staff.

Inspectors can visit a class at any point while it is in session. We will normally choose a place to sit where we can observe both the teacher or the trainer and the learners. We will endeavour to be as unobtrusive as possible and will not join in with any lesson activities. We need to see a class register, a scheme of work (or equivalent) and a lesson plan, so it is helpful if these can be easily available for inspectors, with any handouts being used during the lesson. Inspectors will make notes during the observation as they record their evidence and make their judgements about the lesson.

During the lesson we will look for opportunities to talk with learners and to look at their work. This may be possible during workshop or group activities but we will not disturb the lesson by talking with learners at inappropriate times.

It is worth emphasising here that the focus of an inspector's visit is not on the teaching, but on the learning. We are not looking for a slick and polished performance by the teacher or the trainer, but for events, experiences and activities which will be effective in enabling learners to learn. These may involve a slick and polished performance, but our purpose in the visit will be to judge the quality of learning, how well learners are achieving and the standards they are attaining.

After the observation, we will give brief feedback. This will indicate strengths and weaknesses, but will not include a grade for the lesson. We will find a quiet and confidential area to give this feedback, which may be an adjacent room or some other suitable nearby space. We will try to find a suitable point in the lesson to leave the class and to speak with the teacher or the trainer for two or three minutes. Should this not be possible we will arrange a time later in the day when we can give feedback on the lesson, ideally face to face or possibly by telephone.

The observation period will be about 40 minutes. This can vary depending on the activities being observed, but it is worth alerting your lead inspector if inspectors' visits to lessons are consistently much longer or much shorter than this.

Lessons or other observed learning activities are graded on a seven-point scale:
grade 1 - excellent
grade 2 - very good
grade 3 - good
grade 4 - satisfactory
grade 5 - unsatisfactory
grade 6 - poor
grade 7 - very poor

All the grades for the observed sessions for each area of learning are collated. Inspectors then base their judgements for each area of learning on the overall grading profile rather than on specific sessions. We never identify individual staff.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***Planning and preparing for inspection*** booklet in the ***Planning and preparing for inspection*** section of this toolkit. ***Examples of evidence you could provide for inspectors*** (page 16)
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information

Things to do

- [ ] Brief your staff on how inspectors collect evidence.
- [ ] Ensure you have provided all the evidence requested by your lead inspector.
- [ ] Ensure that all employers and training providers have been briefed and know whether they are likely to be visited.
- [ ] Ensure your visit and observation schedules are kept up-to-date and that any amendments are notified to the relevant people.

Making judgements

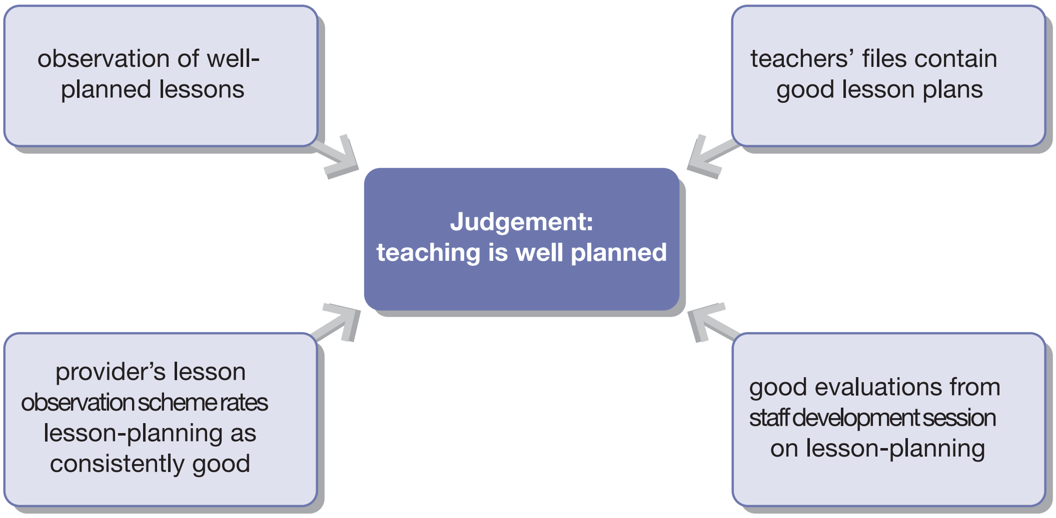
How do inspectors make judgements?

- They gather evidence, test ideas and check facts.
- They check emerging judgments against various types of evidence.
- They hold discussions with colleagues within the inspection team.
- They consider the impact any evidence has on learners and learning.

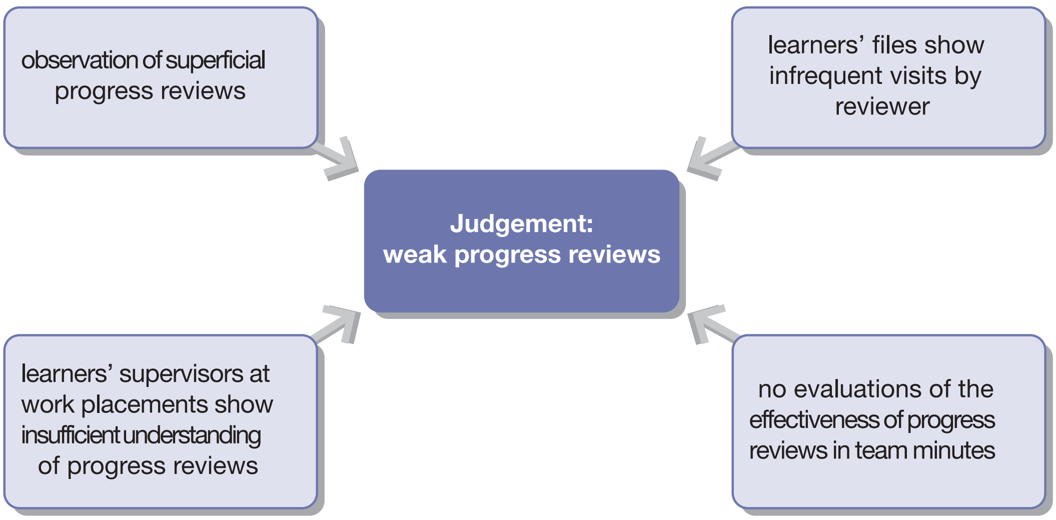
You will have been through this process yourself when you worked on your self-assessment report. This diagram shows the relationship between evidence and judgements.

The diagram shows that each level of the process rests securely on the one below it. The inspection results in a report which expresses judgements about your provision. These are based on the evidence we have gathered and seen during our time with you. Some of the evidence, for example the observations of learning, will come from our close, first-hand look at your work during our visit. Other evidence from planning documents and team minutes for example, will provide evidence of your longer-term development.

Inspectors do not make judgements based solely on one piece of evidence. We seek to check emerging judgements against various types of evidence. For example:



Alternatively:



The inspection is a process of building up a clear and accurate picture and of gathering evidence, testing ideas and checking facts until the evidence is clear and supports a sound judgement. In this process we will always refer to the *Common Inspection Framework* and may often refer to other published inspection reports to ensure consistency across providers of the same type.

If the **evidence** is secure, the **judgements** will be secure.
If the **judgements** are secure, the **grade** will be secure.

Inspectors know that providers can be good in a variety of ways. We are not looking for one model of provision. Neither do we have fixed ideas about the best way to do things. All providers are different and run things in different ways, depending on their culture, resources, skills, experience and traditions. We will approach each inspection with fresh eyes and ears, informed by national standards and the *Common Inspection Framework*, but open to the possibilities of each organisation.

We also take account of the scale and extent of an issue when determining its impact as a key strength or weakness. One very specific weakness, which affects only a minority of learners, will not in itself constitute a key weakness unless its impact is severe.

Finally, despite the tight timescales for inspection, we do not rush to judgement. The daily team meetings are an opportunity to present emerging judgements as early findings to be heard by the nominee and the rest of the inspection team. As nominee, you may agree with these early findings or you may wish to provide further evidence in order to give inspectors the opportunity to review or mediate the emerging judgement. Inspectors too have opportunities to comment or request clarification.

What part does the self-assessment report play in judgements made by inspectors?

- It can alert inspectors to current issues, both positive and negative, facing the organisation.
- A close match between our judgements and yours gives a very positive message about the accuracy of your quality assurance process.
- It contributes to judgements about leadership and management.

We touched on this in the ***Self-assessment and the inspection process*** section of this toolkit. A good self-assessment report can be of enormous value in alerting inspectors to current issues facing the organisation. A weak self-assessment report can be misleading. Our role is not to retrace your steps, but to gather our own evidence and formulate our own judgements. A close match between our judgements and yours gives very positive messages about the accuracy of your quality assurance process and will contribute to judgements about leadership and management.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***Self-assessment and the inspection process*** booklet in the ***Self-assessment and the inspection process*** section of this toolkit
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information

Things to do

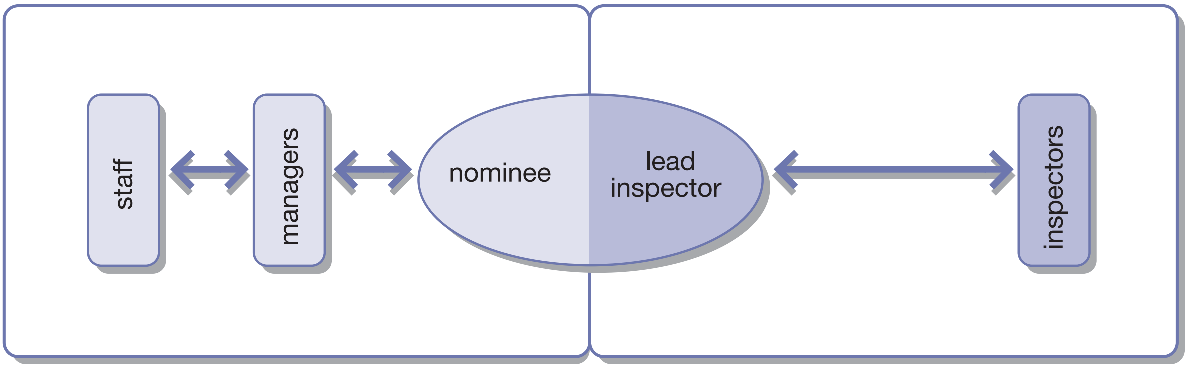
- [ ] Make sure the inspectors have an up-to-date version of your self-assessment report with the latest action plan.
- [ ] Ensure you can provide a wide range of evidence to support or refute inspectors' emerging judgements.

The role of the nominee during the inspection

How can the nominee keep in touch with the inspection?

- Spend time in the base room.
- Have daily informal contact with your lead inspector to share thoughts and raise issues.
- Ensure your staff report back to you any comments made to them by inspectors.

Communication is critical. Make sure that you have cleared your diary so you are available for both your staff and your lead inspector.



Experienced nominees suggest that you should try to get information as quickly as possible from staff about any comments or feedback they have had from inspectors. In this way you will be able to anticipate any emerging themes in advance of team meetings and start thinking about any additional evidence you may wish to make available.

How should the nominee advise staff about emerging judgements?

- There should be good lines of communication.
- Many nominees arrange to meet key managers as a group immediately after the daily team meeting or first thing the following morning.

As the nominee, you need good lines of communication during the inspection week. You clearly will not know everything about your organisation but, if you think that you disagree with inspectors' judgements, you need to be able to contact the relevant member of staff quickly to check the judgement or seek further evidence.

On many inspections, nominees arrange to meet key managers as a group immediately after the daily team meeting or first thing the following morning. This can be a good way for your management team to monitor the progress of the inspection, to review emerging judgements, to identify further sources of evidence and to identify any issues or difficulties.

What if the nominee disagrees with something?

- You should ensure that you fully understand what judgements are being made.
- You can raise concerns individually with your lead inspector.
- You can challenge inspectors' judgements constructively at the daily team meetings.
- At the end of the inspection, if you still feel injustices have been done, you can follow the ALI's complaints procedure.

Good communication between inspectors and the provider's staff is a vital part of the process. Throughout the inspection period we will tell you what we are finding. Through this sharing process, and the dialogue between us, we will arrive at sound judgements by the end of the week. You may not always agree with our findings, but we will take care to explain the reasons for our judgements and take account of any further evidence presented during the inspection.

While it is important not to defend the indefensible, the nominee has a key role in ensuring that inspectors gather a sound evidence base and do not miss key facts or issues. If you think that inspectors are getting it wrong, it is perfectly proper to challenge their findings constructively at team meetings. You can also raise concerns individually with your lead inspector. At the end of the process if you still feel that injustices have been done, the ALI's complaints procedure is available. All complaints are investigated by a senior member of the ALI's staff and ultimately by an independent adjudicator. Details about this are in our publication *Making a complaint*.

What if problems occur during the inspection?

- Your staff should let you know if any problems occur.
- You may decide to deal with problems yourself or talk with your lead inspector.
- At the end of the inspection if you still feel injustices have been done, you can follow the ALI's complaints procedure.

Inspections can be fraught at times. Even the most professional inspection team can seem intrusive. The pressure of being inspected can cause skilled and confident staff to feel insecure and vulnerable. Inspectors too are under pressure to work quickly, make good judgements and write clear and accurate reports. When we are aware of these feelings and use our professional skills to support each other, inspections run smoothly and can be a positive experience for both providers and inspectors. We receive few complaints about inspections and most feedback from providers is very positive. Nevertheless, the intensity of the inspection period can lead to misunderstandings and sometimes small incidents can expand quickly and disproportionately. As nominee you may decide to deal yourself with any concerns raised by your staff, as will the lead inspector with concerns raised by individual inspectors. The relationship between nominee and lead inspector can also be a powerful tool in dealing quickly and effectively with any sensitivities or concerns.

Inspectors should exercise the highest standards of professional practice and conduct. If you feel that this is not the case, it is important to discuss this with your lead inspector, who will investigate and take appropriate action. Equally, any serious concerns inspectors have about the conduct of your staff will be raised with you.

Should you have a serious concern about the conduct of the inspection that has not been resolved by your lead inspector, the complaints procedure is open to you. All complaints are investigated by a senior member of the ALI's staff and ultimately by an independent adjudicator. Details about this are in our publication *Making a complaint*.

Further information | Things to do

- ***An introduction to the role of the nominee*** booklet in the ***Choosing a nominee*** section of this toolkit
- *Making a complaint* booklet in the ***Appendix*** of this toolkit
- ***The ALI's 'Dignity at Work' statement*** (page 31)
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information | Things to do

- [ ] Clear your diary as much as possible.
- [ ] Set up a system to get feedback from your staff about any comments or feedback they have had from inspectors.
- [ ] Set up a system to feed back inspectors' findings quickly to your staff and one that ensures you can obtain any additional information or evidence.

The daily team meetings

What are the daily team meetings?

- A meeting of the inspection team usually held at the end of each day.
- An opportunity for inspectors to present their emerging findings to the rest of the team.
- An opportunity for the judgements to be tested and explored.

The meetings are likely to last from about one to one-and-a-half hours. Usually they take place at about 5.00pm, but on some inspections where there is significant twilight or evening provision it can be better to hold them in the mornings. Your lead inspector will try to keep meetings short and focused, but it is important that issues are fully understood and covered.

Who should attend?

- The inspectors.
- The nominee.

Only the inspection team attends the daily team meetings.

What happens at the daily team meetings?

- Inspectors present their emerging findings to the rest of the team.
- The judgements are tested and explored.

The daily team meetings are an opportunity for inspectors to present their emerging findings to the rest of the team and for those judgements to be tested and explored. If an issue is detailed and specific within an area of learning, lead inspectors will probably invite the nominee to discuss this with the inspector outside the main meeting.

The emerging findings are presented for each area of learning, usually in the form of strengths and weaknesses across the seven key questions in the *Common Inspection Framework*, with short accompanying explanations. Each presentation lasts about five to ten minutes, with opportunities for questions from the nominee and other inspectors. Leadership and management inspectors will use the early meetings to ask for evidence of the impact of leadership and management on the areas of learning, but by the middle of the inspection they will also be presenting their emerging judgements. When presenting our findings, and later in our written reports, we never identify individual members of staff.

At the first feedback meeting, findings are presented as emerging thoughts, not as fixed strengths and weaknesses. As the inspection progresses, judgements are firmed up until key strengths and weaknesses can be presented at the final daily team meeting before grading. We often use a flip chart to enable the presented findings more easily to be seen and considered by the team.

initial impressions → emerging strengths and weaknesses → key strengths and weaknesses

What role does the nominee play?

- You play a crucial role.
- You must fully understand the emerging judgements.
- Challenge those you disagree with or do not understand.

As nominee you have a crucial role to play at these meetings. It is through working with you that we will get our judgements right by the end of the inspection. You will also help us to use our time efficiently. If you think we are wrong, it is important to tell us, and to direct us to any evidence which may cause us to reconsider our views. Alternatively, if you agree with our findings, strengths and weaknesses, it is important to say so. Good nominees never attempt to defend the indefensible but will challenge our judgements effectively when appropriate and support their challenge by providing additional evidence to inspectors.

The daily team meetings can be stressful for the nominee. It can feel intimidating, sitting with a group of inspectors and hearing judgements about your organisation, and feeling that somehow you are responsible for the outcome of it all. Inspectors are aware of this. Your lead inspector in particular will help you to participate and contribute. It is in our interests to support your contributions to the discussion. Without your interventions, we may miss crucial sources of evidence, which will undermine our final judgements.

Many nominees talk afterwards about the 'day two' effect. In the early part of the inspection it can sound at the daily team meetings as if inspectors are presenting a very bleak picture of your organisation, with many weaknesses and few strengths. This is because strengths are rarely contested and weaknesses need thorough investigation. These early concerns and issues often disappear once inspectors have sufficiently covered the evidence base and have been able to focus on the key judgements about the organisation. It is important to remember that these are emerging weaknesses. Try not to take them personally.

What other team meetings might be held?

- Your lead inspector may suggest meeting with you and maybe other relevant staff outside the daily team meetings.
- There may be individual evidence review meetings.

Your lead inspector may suggest that they meet with you and other relevant staff to discuss particular issues that have arisen from the daily team meeting. This is an opportunity to discuss specific areas in more detail and identify where additional evidence can be found.

On some large or more complex inspections, your lead inspector may decide to hold individual evidence review meetings for each area of learning on the second-to-last day of the inspection. These meetings are attended by your lead inspector, the nominee and often one of the leadership and management inspectors. They are an opportunity to explore inspection findings from each of the individual areas in more depth than is possible at the whole team meetings. At these meetings the lead inspector will ensure that judgements are properly supported by evidence and that key strengths and weaknesses accurately reflect the key judgements. It is an opportunity for the nominee to clarify any issues or concerns in a meeting which, being smaller, can feel less daunting than the big team meetings.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***An introduction to the role of the nominee*** booklet in the ***Choosing a nominee*** section of this toolkit
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information

Things to do

- ☐ Set up a system to get feedback from your staff about any comments or feedback they have had from inspectors.
- ☐ Set up a system to feed back inspectors' findings quickly to your staff and one that ensures you can obtain any additional information or evidence.

The grading meeting

What is the grading meeting?

- This is the meeting where interim grades are decided.
- It takes place on the last day of the inspection visit.

By the time of the grading meeting, the key judgements will have been established. Once the grading meeting begins, the evidence-gathering part of the inspection is over. Exceptionally, providers may wish to present further evidence at the grading meeting, but this is rare when good communication channels have been kept open during the inspection. At the grading meeting, the focus shifts from evidence gathering to determination of the interim grades. The grade given is determined mainly on the balance of the strengths and weaknesses, though performance against all the key questions is also taken into account. It is not an arithmetical process of comparing the number of strengths with the number of weaknesses. Inspectors base their judgements about the significance and weight of the identified strengths and weaknesses, not just how many there are of each.

The grades are interim because all inspection reports are subject to further moderation through the ALI's quality assurance procedures. Most grades given at the inspection remain unchanged, but grades are not final until the report is published.

Areas of learning and leadership and management are graded against a five-point scale:

grade 1 - outstanding
grade 2 - good
grade 3 - satisfactory
grade 4 - unsatisfactory
grade 5 - very weak

For each area of learning, inspectors will make judgements on the contributory areas of learning if there are more than 10 learners. Discuss this with your lead inspector. You can find a list of the contributory areas of learning in the ***Providing data: An overview*** booklet in the ***Data*** section of this toolkit.

Who should attend?

- The inspectors.
- The nominee.

Only the inspection team attends the grading meeting.

What happens at the grading meeting?

- Notification of any changes to key strengths and weaknesses since the previous daily team meeting.
- Grading of each area and contributory areas of learning.
- Grading of leadership and management, followed by the giving of contributory grades for equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

The grading meeting is chaired by your lead inspector. Once the team has been notified of any overnight changes to key strengths and weaknesses the grading begins, with each area of learning taken in turn.

This is an overview of how each area and contributory areas of learning are graded:

- Your lead inspector is likely to ask for a brief summary of the key issues. This is unlikely to be a full account of strengths and weaknesses as the team will already have heard these at the previous evening's team meeting.
- Inspectors and the nominee have opportunities to ask any further questions or seek any further clarification.
- Your lead inspector invites the nominee to make any final points which the team may find helpful as they approach grading.
- The nominee is not able to contribute from this point until the grade is determined.
- Your lead inspector will then invite each member of the team in turn to propose a grade for each contributory area of learning based on the information which they have heard.
- The inspector who inspected the area grades last.
- If all the inspectors agree on the grade, your lead inspector records it as the interim grade from the inspection.
- If the inspectors fail to agree, your lead inspector will chair a discussion of the main points and issues, inviting colleagues to explain their reasons for their proposed grade.
- This discussion continues until consensus is reached, when the agreed interim grade is recorded.
- Following the grading of the contributory areas, your lead inspector will then go through the same process to determine the overall grade for the area of learning. This will take into account the proportion of learners in each contributory area.

The purpose of this method of grading is to ensure that grades result from a corporate judgement by the inspection team. It is part of the quality assurance process of the inspection and ensures that all members of the team are familiar with grading decisions and take responsibility for them.

The grading of leadership and management follows a similar process. The difference is that the overall grade for leadership and management is determined first and then the contributory grades for equality of opportunity and quality assurance will be determined.

Once the grading has been completed, and should time permit, the team will then decide on the 'key challenges' for the provider and consider which learners' views should be published in the report.

What role does the nominee play?

- The nominee listens to the individual presentations and query anything you do not understand.
- They answer any questions that inspectors ask.
- They briefly make any final points that may be helpful to the inspectors.
- Nominees are not involved in deciding the interim grade.

You are part of the inspection team and therefore are involved right up until the lead inspector asks the inspectors to grade. The key judgements will already have been established. Your role is to ensure that you fully understand them and that you are sure that the inspectors have had all the evidence they need.

How soon can I tell people about our grades?

- We ask you not make them known outside the organisation until the report is published.

The grades are interim and can be changed through the moderation process. We therefore ask you not to make interim grades known outside your organisation until the report is published.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***An introduction to the role of the nominee*** booklet in the ***Choosing a nominee*** section of this toolkit
- ***Providing data: An overview*** booklet in the ***Data*** section of this booklet
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information

Things to do

- [ ] Review all the evidence for the judgements from the last daily team meeting and make sure that you understand how the judgements have been arrived at.
- [ ] Talk with your lead inspector if you have additional evidence to produce before the grading meeting.

The feedback meeting

What is the feedback meeting?

- An opportunity for the inspection team to give a brief report to the provider's staff, representatives from the funding body and anyone else you would like to invite.

The feedback meeting is an opportunity for the inspection team to give a brief report on the inspection findings to the provider's staff and representatives from funding bodies. The meeting is chaired by the lead inspector and is normally held on the last day of the inspection. If the inspection takes place over a wide geographical area, the feedback meeting may be held a week after the inspection.

During the inspection, your lead inspector will discuss with you the arrangements for the feedback meeting, for example its location and numbers of attendees. The date and time will have been agreed at the inspection planning meeting. Large meetings may use computer-generated presentations or overhead projector slides. Handouts may be more appropriate for smaller meetings.

Who should attend?

- The inspection team.
- The nominee.
- Senior management.
- Representatives from the funding body.
- Other staff.
- Any other individuals involved with the learners.

The feedback meeting is your meeting and you can choose who you want to invite to it. The lead inspector will invite representatives from your funding organisations, such as the local LSC or Jobcentre Plus. Some feedback meetings are quite small with just the key management staff. Others are much larger with partners invited. You will need to let your lead inspector know how many people you expect at the meeting so that sufficient resources can be prepared.

What happens at the feedback meeting?

- Your lead inspector introduces the inspection team.
- The findings from each area of learning are presented.
- The findings on leadership and management are presented.
- Your lead inspector summarises the next stages of the process.

The lead inspector introduces the inspection team and outlines the evidence base for the inspection. They will also comment briefly on the extent to which the inspection team agreed with the self-assessment report. The findings from each area of learning, followed by leadership and management, are then reported on. The spoken feedback is very similar to the format of the daily team meetings; the inspectors will talk through strengths and weaknesses and give some examples to illustrate their points. Each inspector's feedback will last about five to ten minutes. The feedback meeting concludes with your lead inspector summarising the next stages of the process leading to the publication of the report and the preparation of the post-inspection action plan and, if necessary, a summary of arrangements for reinspection. The feedback meeting is not an opportunity to revisit inspection judgements, though inspectors are pleased to clarify any points at the end of the meeting. We will leave you with a copy of our presentation materials, which will include a summary of the inspection evidence base and the interim grades and strengths and weaknesses for the areas of learning and leadership and management.

The inspection team will leave at the end of the feedback meeting.

What role does the nominee play?

- Makes the arrangements for the feedback meeting.
- Invites individuals to attend.
- Is ready to follow up on any queries and questions staff may have following the meeting.

You will need to decide who to invite to the feedback meeting. Let your lead inspector know so that sufficient resources can be prepared. You will also need to decide where the meeting is to take place and ensure that any equipment for the presentation is available. Discuss this with your lead inspector.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***An introduction to the role of the nominee*** booklet in the ***Choosing a nominee*** section of this toolkit
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information | **Things to do**

- ❑ Decide who to invite.
- ❑ Make sure that the room and the equipment are ready.
- ❑ Make arrangements to debrief staff.

After the inspection

When is the report written?

- Individual sections are drafted during the inspection.
- Your lead inspector puts together a draft version of the report in the week after inspection.
- The report is moderated.
- About one week before publication, you receive a copy to check for factual accuracy.
- The report is published about seven weeks after the end of the inspection.

Individual sections of the report will be drafted by inspectors during the inspection week, once they have confidence in their judgements. Additional writing, editing and amendments are usually completed on the last evening of the inspection, after the daily team meeting and in preparation for the following morning's grading meeting. Inspectors may show drafts of their text to their contact member of the provider's staff, but there is no formal requirement for this. Your lead inspector collects paper and electronic versions of draft report text from inspectors at the end of the inspection, along with their inspection notebooks. We do not leave draft versions of text with you or your staff.

During the week following the inspection, your lead inspector will put together a draft version of the report. This involves editing and sometimes revising text and bullet points written by inspectors during the inspection. Your lead inspector will check judgements made in the draft text against inspectors' evidence notes. Bullet points and occasionally grades may be changed in this process. Lead inspectors liaise with their assisting lead inspectors and their inspection managers if they identify a need to change a grade given during the inspection. Any major changes are discussed with you. The lead inspector will also write some additional report sections, for example the key findings.

One week after the inspection, the draft report is sent to an inspection manager to be moderated. The inspection manager checks that judgements are clear and that there is consistency between the text, the key strengths and weaknesses and the grades given. Grades may be changed at this stage. Any grade changes are discussed with you. In addition, there is a check that the report is complete. This may result in some additional writing or revisions by your lead inspector before the report is passed for editing. During the editing process, editors ensure that the report conforms to the ALI's house style and reporting conventions. Editors may check with the lead inspector should any of the text be unclear.

What does the report look like?

- The report is in two sections - the inspection report and the detailed inspection findings.
- You can see published inspection reports on our website, **www.ali.gov.uk**.

The report is in two sections. The first section, which is published on our website, **www.ali.gov.uk**, contains information about the provider, the scope of the inspected provision, some inspection statistics, grades and a summary of the inspection findings, including key strengths and weaknesses. It is designed to be written in clear, simple and accessible language that is free of jargon and can be readily understood.

The second section contains the detailed inspection findings and is available on request through our website. It is designed as a management briefing which explains inspectors' judgements in detail. In this section we try to avoid descriptions of your provision and concentrate instead on judgements and evaluation. The second section consists of written reports on each of the areas of learning inspected and a slightly longer section on leadership and management which includes sub-sections on equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

Our main publication is through the website, but both you and your lead inspector will receive a printed copy of the full report including both sections.

Please note that any published reports for inspections that took place before April 2004 will not include grades for the contributory areas of learning that are listed in the Appendix of ***Providing data: An overview*** in the ***Data*** section of this toolkit.

What role does the nominee play after the inspection?

- Debriefing of senior management and staff.
- Communication within the organisation about the inspection.
- Developing the post-inspection action plan.
- Carrying out a factual accuracy check on the pre-publication report.
- Providing feedback to the ALI on the inspection process.
- Deciding how you will use the report in any publicity.

During inspection planning you will have thought about how and to whom you will need to communicate inspection messages after the inspection. You may also hold debriefing meetings with staff. Depending on the results of the inspection, your staff may need support to help them move forward and see the findings as a contribution to continuous improvement.

Providers are required to update their action or development plans within two months of the publication of their inspection report to take account of inspection findings. The action plan must address both strengths and weaknesses. Your funding body may support you in this.

We aim to publish inspection reports within about seven weeks of the end of the inspection. Approximately one week before publication of the report, you will receive a pre-publication copy of the report. We invite you to tell us if there are any inaccuracies in the text. You have four working days to respond.

After the inspection, we will send you an evaluation form. Please provide us with feedback on the inspection process. We value what you have to say and we act on it.

Some providers use the positive results from inspection reports in their publicity. The pre-publication copy enables you to prepare any publicity material, but this must be embargoed until the date of the publication on the website. Contact the ALI's press and publicity manager if you need more information.

Will we be reinspected?

- Yes - if any grades 4 or 5 have been given at inspection. (Only main grades, not contributory grades.)
- There are two types of reinspection, full and partial.

Reinspections are triggered when grades 4 or 5 are given at inspection. These only apply to the main grades. Grades 4 and 5 for contributory areas are not taken into account for reinspection. There are two kinds of reinspection, full and partial. Full reinspections follow judgements of inadequacy, defined as when one third of the areas of learning and/or leadership and management are judged to be unsatisfactory. At full reinspections all of the provision is inspected. Partial reinspections occur when provision is judged to be adequate but when one or more areas of learning are graded less than satisfactory. Only these areas are reinspected. We do not reinspect solely on unsatisfactory contributory grades for leadership and management. The final decision on adequacy or inadequacy rests with the Chief Inspector.

Reinspections should be completed within a year of the publication of the inspection report and usually involve three visits by inspection teams to monitor progress and finally to grade the provision.

How long will it be until our next inspection?

- Normally four years.

Normally four years, unless you are eligible for a quality monitoring inspection.

What is a quality monitoring inspection?

- This is for providers whose provision has been judged satisfactory rather than good or outstanding.
- It takes place 12 to 18 months after publication of the report.
- It is a series of short visits by a small inspection team to monitor standards.

Quality monitoring inspections have been introduced as part of our commitment to continuous improvement. They are short visits by a small inspection team to providers whose provision has been judged satisfactory, rather than good or outstanding. They will take place 12 to 18 months after the publication of a provider's inspection or reinspection report. Their purpose is to determine whether the satisfactory standards identified at inspection or reinspection have improved, have been maintained or have deteriorated.

Further information

Things to do

- **www.ali.gov.uk** in the News & Publications section - *Handbook for inspectors*
- ***An introduction to the role of the nominee*** booklet in the ***Choosing a nominee*** section of this toolkit
- ***Providing Data: An overview*** in the ***Data*** section of this toolkit
- ***Reinspection*** booklet in the ***Reinspection*** section of this toolkit (June 2004)
- ***Quality monitoring inspections*** booklet in the ***Quality monitoring inspections*** section of this toolkit (June 2004)
- Published inspection reports on **www.ali.gov.uk** in the Inspection Reports & Statistics section
- ***During the inspection*** section on the CD-ROM in this toolkit

Further information

Things to do

- [ ] Debrief staff.
- [ ] Decide who else should be debriefed following the inspection.
- [ ] Start working on the post-inspection action plan.
- [ ] Be ready to carry out a factual accuracy check on the pre-publication report.
- [ ] Provide feedback to the ALI.
- [ ] Decide how to use the report in any publicity.

AND finally

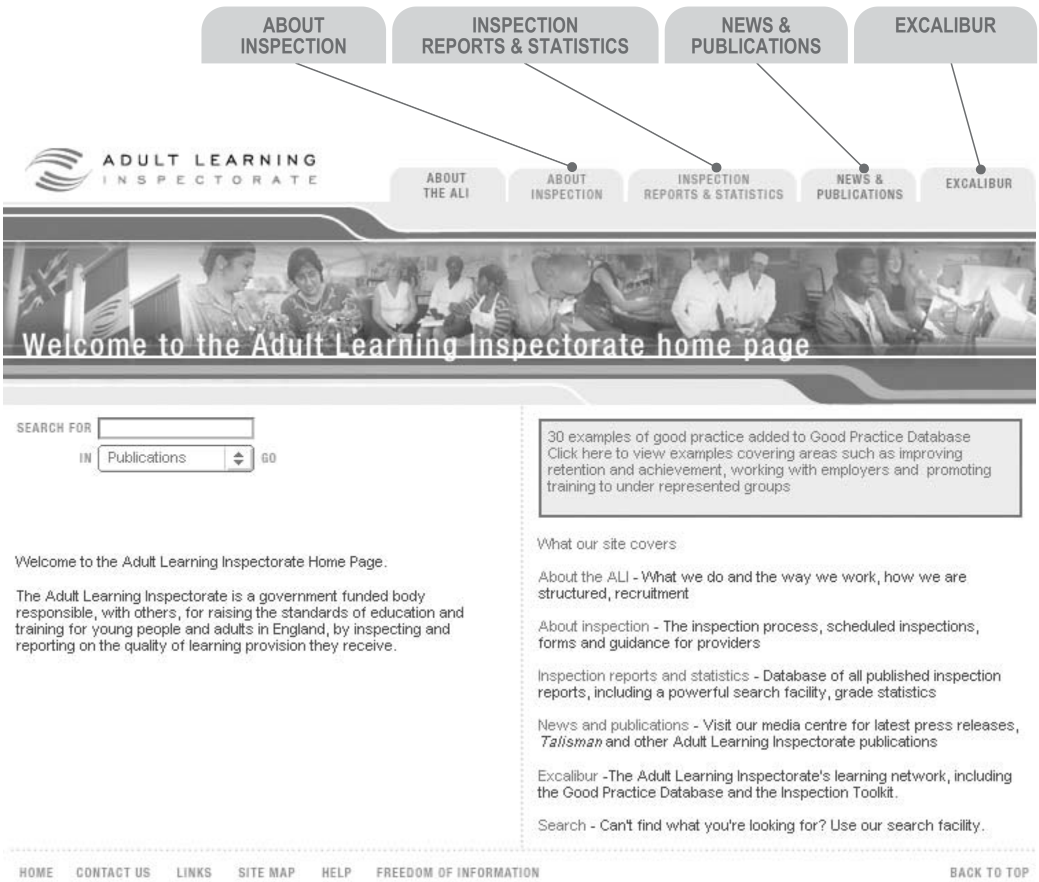
No two inspections are the same. Providers vary enormously in size and scope, and it is the job of the lead inspector to ensure that the inspection plan properly matches the provider's activities and makes best use of time during the inspection period. You may find some small variations between your inspection plan and the model outlined in this booklet. They should not be significant, but if you have any concerns, discuss them with your lead inspector. We want you to have confidence in the integrity of the process. You should feel that the inspection plan is appropriate for your provision, that inspectors conduct themselves professionally and that judgements are securely based on evidence. You should feel that the report accurately reflects inspection findings and is of value to you as you further develop your organisation and improve the quality of your provision.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Further information

1 Using the ALI's website

The ***Further information*** boxes in this booklet signpost you to where you can find more detailed information to help you. One key place to look is on our website, **www.ali.gov.uk**. You will find additional information about the inspection process and useful guidelines to help you plan and prepare for inspection. You can also read published reports. Look in the following four sections:



The ***During the inspection*** section of the CD-ROM in this toolkit has inspectors and nominees talking about the various stages of the inspection process. This material is also available on our website.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

Further information

2 The ALI's 'Dignity at Work' statement (April 2004)

Statement

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment within its own workforce, nor will it tolerate any form of intimidation directed at its employees from individuals or organisations with whom the inspectorate's staff interact in the course of their duties.

Who could be involved?

The ALI's main business is inspection, and its inspection remit encompasses a wide range of learning providers in different contexts. The process involves full-time and associate inspectors, staff from the ALI office in Spring Place and the learners, nominees, trainers, assessors, support staff and managers at all levels within learning providers. Other partners, principally funding organisations, are also involved at various stages.

Context

Inspection should be a positive experience but the process, however well managed, can be a source of tension for all those involved. The ALI is committed to ensuring that all parties involved in the inspection process operate in an atmosphere of mutual respect, maintain the highest standards of professionalism in all that they do and work to maintain the dignity and self-respect of all those with whom they work.

What does this mean in practice?

All parties to the inspection process have the right to:

- be treated with consideration
- be heard
- work in an environment which is free from any form of intimidation, harassment or bullying.

The ALI will not tolerate any behaviour which may undermine the dignity of others, from its own workforce, from its partners or from those being inspected.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- verbal abuse
- sexist or racist behaviour
- threats or threatening behaviour
- constant unnecessary interruptions
- interference with a person's legitimate work or expression of their point of view.

Assertive behaviour and language are acceptable; aggression and abuse are not. Professional debate about emerging inspection outcomes is a vital part of the inspection process. It should be encouraged and should always be conducted in an open and dignified manner.

Definitions of various forms of harassment are detailed in the inspectorate's bullying and harassment policy. This policy extends to any form of unfair and unwelcome behaviour. It does not include the legitimate management practices or procedures necessary to fairly comment on, or deal with, poor work, attitudes or behaviour. Inappropriate treatment may be unintentional. Even so it is still unacceptable.

What happens if these principles are not observed?

The ALI's primary concern will be to return to dignified working practices as soon as possible. The procedures to be followed will depend on the circumstances of the particular case.

1. Unacceptable behaviour from learning providers

Unacceptable behaviour may arise through telephone calls from providers to the ALI's inspection or office-based staff, conduct during face-to-face meetings, conduct during an inspection, or conduct during events other than inspection visits.

In the first instance, ALI staff will politely point out to the individual responsible that offence is being caused. If the situation is not resolved promptly, the member of staff involved should report the incident to their line manager who will then consider the action to be taken in consultation with the human resources department. Where the incident occurs during an inspection, the lead inspector will discuss the issue informally with the nominee. If the situation is not resolved promptly, the lead inspector will immediately contact an inspection manager.

Following investigation, the ALI may take a number of actions of escalating severity depending on the circumstances and the nature of the issue concerned. These actions may include:

- a request for an internal investigation by the provider
- escalation to a more senior level within the provider or the lodging of a formal complaint
- informing the funding body of the issues and requesting their assistance (*)
- withdrawal of inspectors from certain inspection activities (e.g. interviews with specific members of staff)
- withdrawal from all contact with the provider, including withdrawal from any current or pending inspections, and reporting the full details to the funding body (*)
- if an inspection is cancelled due to unacceptable behaviour by a provider, the ALI may also publish a brief report to this effect on its website instead of a normal inspection report. (*)

(*) *These are relatively serious sanctions and should only be implemented after consultation with an inspection manager and with the approval of a director of inspection.*

2. Unacceptable behaviour from other individuals or organisations

If ALI staff experience unacceptable behaviour from other individuals or organisations this will be dealt with using similar principles to those outlined for dealing with incidents involving providers.

3. Unacceptable behaviour by the ALI's staff towards providers

If learning providers consider that ALI staff have behaved in an unacceptable manner during the course of an inspection they have recourse to the inspectorate's complaints procedure. Full details of this are described in the ALI's complaints booklet which is issued to all providers and is available on the ALI's website (**www.ali.gov.uk**).

During inspections, any issue of this sort should always be raised with the lead inspector in the first instance. However if it is the lead inspector him/herself who is the subject of the complaint and the issue has not been resolved informally, then the nominee should raise the issue with the assisting lead or another full-time inspector.

4. Unacceptable behaviour among ALI staff

The ALI has separate policies and procedures to address unacceptable behaviour among its own staff.

excalibur LEARNING NETWORK

Through Excalibur, the Adult Learning Inspectorate aims to build a national quality community for everyone in the Learning & Skills sector.

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ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE