

HANDBOOK FOR INSPECTORS



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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HANDBOOK FOR INSPECTORS



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of inspection

Inspection has three main functions:

- to give an independent public account of the quality of education and training, the standards achieved and the efficiency with which resources are managed.
- to help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and weaknesses and highlighting good and poor practice.
- to keep the Secretary of State and the funding bodies informed about the quality and standards of education and training.

Through inspection, learners receive information which enables them to make informed choices about learning programmes they might join.

Following an inspection, a provider of publicly funded provision is required to submit an action plan to its funding organisation/s, detailing how it intends to respond to the inspection findings.

Roles in the inspection process

Lead inspector:	A full-time inspector, responsible for planning, managing and leading the inspection and drafting the inspection report.
Assisting lead inspector:	A full-time inspector, whose main responsibility, in addition to inspection, is the quality assurance of the inspection and who supports and advises members of the inspection team.
Associate inspector:	An inspector contracted to the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) on an inspection-by-inspection basis, to inspect an area of learning or leadership and management.
Specialist adviser:	In the absence of an inspector with the required specialist knowledge, a specialist adviser works alongside an inspector, to provide this knowledge.
Provider's nominee:	A senior member of the provider's staff who helps the lead inspector to organise the inspection, and ensures that the inspection team has full access to all relevant evidence. The nominee attends all inspection meetings and is the link between the inspection team and the provider.
Inspection manager:	A senior manager of the ALI, who may attend an inspection in both a line management and quality assurance capacity. Inspection managers moderate inspection reports.

Director: A director of the ALI may attend an inspection in a quality assurance capacity.

Observer: A person viewing aspects of the inspection without taking part in it, such as a trainee inspector or a member of the ALI's administration centre staff.

The lead inspector and the assisting lead inspector may also inspect areas of learning or leadership and management.

Purpose of the handbook

This handbook is intended to guide ALI inspectors in all aspects of procedure and practice related to inspection. The handbook is on the ALI's website (www.ali.gov.uk) and can help people outside the ALI gain an understanding of how inspectors go about their work. Information on inspection contained in the Inspection Toolkit, which is aimed at providers, is based on this handbook.

The handbook relates to those inspections carried out solely by the ALI, which include the inspection of:

- work-based learning for young people
- skills training for adults
- programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- Ufi **learndirect**
- adult and community learning
- information, advice and guidance provision
- prison education and training
- provision funded by government departments other than Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Department for Work and Pensions
- provision funded privately

A separate handbook, available on the websites of the ALI and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), relates specifically to inspections of colleges, directed by Ofsted and carried out jointly by the ALI and Ofsted.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the *Common Inspection Framework*. A range of guidance documents on the *Common Inspection Framework* explains how it applies to different types of provision. These documents are available on the ALI's website and in the Inspection Toolkit for providers.

SECTION 1

Overview of the inspection process

BEFORE AN INSPECTION

Scheduling

- The ALI plans an annual programme of inspections and consults on the list with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Jobcentre Plus, the DfES and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).
- The ALI's regional link inspectors will maintain regular communication with LSC and Jobcentre Plus staff in order to inform the scheduling of inspections.
- The ALI normally notifies providers of their inspection three to four months before the inspection is scheduled to end.
- The LSC and/or Jobcentre Plus provide the ALI with a range of information about the provider. This might include: self-assessment grades; development plans; performance data; learners' records; and information on matters of finance and governance as appropriate. The ALI uses this information to carry out a pre-inspection analysis.
- The provider nominates one person - the nominee - as their representative on the inspection team. (See p.15, The provider's nominee.)
- The provider's nominee is invited to a briefing event to help them prepare for inspection.

Pre-inspection analysis

Some six months before inspection, a pre-inspection analysis is carried out to determine the provisional number of inspection days for each inspection. The analysis is guided by four principles, of which the first is the most important.

- (i) In arriving at the resource levels for inspections, the main guide is previous inspection grades. A provider that received good grades in cycle 1 will get a reduced intensity inspection in cycle 2. If this provider offers a number of areas of learning, only a small sample will be inspected. Providers that obtained mainly satisfactory grades in cycle 1 will also have a less intensive inspection in cycle 2; some sampling of areas of learning is likely for these providers too. Where a provider has a significant record of unsatisfactory grades, the intensity of inspection will be broadly the same as in cycle 1. All significant areas of learning will be inspected.
- (ii) In arriving at the resource level for an inspection, the picture presented by the previous inspection grades is set against achievement data available from the funding body. In particular, achievement rates for providers that obtained good grades previously will be checked to ensure that these have been more or less maintained. If there has been a significant decline, a more intensive inspection may be considered.

- (iii) Where there are new areas of learning and/or learner numbers have substantially increased, the inspection resource level might be higher than that suggested by an analysis of previous inspection grades.
- (iv) The inspection resource devoted to a new provider will be broadly the same as it would have been in cycle 1. All significant areas of learning will be inspected.

In short, subject to the application of principles (ii) and (iii), the intensity of inspection in cycle 2 is determined by cycle 1 inspection grades. The inspection resource devoted to a provider being inspected for the first time will be the same as for other cycle 1 inspections. Clusters of small providers with fewer than 20 learners may be inspected together.

Allocation of inspections

The ALI's inspection planning and deployment team (IPDT) consults with funding organisations as soon as the provisional list of providers has been selected.

At the end of the consultation period, IPDT notifies providers of their inclusion in the inspection programme.

Following pre-inspection analysis, IPDT's planning team gathers information about the providers to be inspected. Some inspections are scheduled centrally by IPDT. These inspections include those of large specialist providers where a significant number of full-time inspectors from the same area of learning are needed at the same time. Most inspections are scheduled by inspection managers (IMs) together with their groups of inspectors.

IPDT matches appropriate inspections to inspector teams, taking account of the aspects of the ALI remit, areas of learning, and home location covered by the group. IPDT also liaises with the reports production department (RPD) to agree the number of inspections that can finish in any given week, taking account of inspection or reinspection activity already scheduled.

IPDT provides IMs with information about the inspections to be covered by their team. For providers in their second cycle of inspection, this includes the data collected for pre-inspection analysis, the record of the result of the analysis, and an inspection requirement form (IRF) complete with provider information, including areas of learning, provisional learner numbers, geographical information and the approved number of on-site and other inspection days. Less information will be available for providers in their first cycle of inspection. IMs will also be given a list of end-dates for inspections to ensure an even throughput of inspection reports to RPD. When allocating inspections, IMs take account of current guidance on the deployment of lead inspectors to different types of inspection, the need to provide balanced workloads and the need for inspectors to develop new areas of expertise.

Each IM's team is linked to a named member of IPDT for support throughout the allocation process. IPDT's planning team collates pre-allocation information for IMs.

Each allocation session will normally plan three months of inspection activity. Inspectors are expected to attend the allocation session unless they are on inspection, sick, or on annual leave.

Inspectors' tasks

The lead inspector

- finds out as much as possible about the provider. Lead inspectors should review the information used at the pre-inspection analysis. (See p.17, Gathering information.)
- contacts the provider's nominee to inform them of the inspection date and set a date for the planning meeting. Sufficient time should be allowed between the planning meeting and the inspection for the provider to prepare for the inspection.
- invites a representative of the relevant funding organisation/s to the planning meeting and the inspection feedback. (Jobcentre Plus should be notified via the e-mail address PD4-Quality-Team@Jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk).
- confirms which areas of learning are to be inspected, establishes approximately how many learners will be in each at the time of the inspection, and finds out the geographical spread of the provision. The lead inspector assess the value of, and scope for, inspecting aspects of provision during the period leading up to the final period of inspection. (See p.19, guidance on the planning meeting.)
- checks with IPDT that the ALI has received the provider's self-assessment report from the funding organisation.
- checks that the ALI has received performance data about the provider and assures themselves of the accuracy and validity of the data.
- provisionally agrees where the inspectors are to be based. For the inspection of a national provider, inspectors may need to be based in several areas of the country.
- uses the information from the provider and pre-inspection analysis to decide on the composition of the inspection team. (See p.18, guidance on the composition and deployment of the inspection team.)
- sends a completed inspection requirement form (IRF) to their inspection manager for approval.
- sends a letter of confirmation to the nominee setting out the dates of the planning meeting and the inspection. The letter is copied to the relevant funding organisation(s).
- in liaison with IPDT and the relevant inspection manager, decides if trainee inspectors will be involved in the inspection. If they are, the lead inspector obtains the agreement of the provider and arranges for the trainee inspector to be supervised by a registered inspector.
- when notified of the inspection team, checks that everyone is suitable to carry out the inspection, and notifies IPDT of any concerns about the composition of the team.
- chairs the planning meeting. (See p.19, guidance on the planning meeting).
- provides the nominee with professional profiles of the inspection team.
- agrees with the nominee a schedule of inspection activities and times of meetings. If the lead inspector intends to carry out inspection activities in the period leading up to the final weeks of the inspection as well as in the final week itself, the schedule should make this clear. Details of any learning sessions to be observed should not be notified in advance.
- selects the sample of learners to be interviewed.

- explores, with the nominee, the scope for looking at areas of interest or concern to the provider within the overall inspection schedule.
- having collected a range of information from the pre-inspection analysis and the planning meeting, the lead produces a pre-inspection report and team briefing. This will support the detailed planning of the inspection and include main points from the planning meeting. Copies should be sent to each team member and the nominee. Particular attention should be paid to the inclusion of specific briefing for inspectors who will be required to inspect on their own. (See p.22, guidance on the pre-inspection report and team briefing.)
- carries out a health and safety risk assessment for each inspection and informs the inspection team of any findings through the pre-inspection report. (See p.48, guidance on risk assessment.)
- liaises closely with the nominee about the inspection schedule as the inspection draws closer, agreeing changes if necessary. The lead inspector liaises with members of the inspection team as appropriate. The lead inspector should remind associate inspectors not to contact the nominee directly.
- informs the nominee that the provider will be able to evaluate the inspection by means of an evaluation form that the ALI sends out with the published inspection report.

All inspectors' tasks

- decline requests to inspect a provider with which they have a conflict of interest. (See p.52, guidance on avoiding conflicts of interest.)
- decline requests to inspect areas of learning or other areas that they are not registered to inspect.
- read the self-assessment report sent to them by IPDT; carefully read the pre-inspection report and team briefing; record in the inspection notebook additional themes for the area they are inspecting.
- when required, plan their inspection activities in detail. For example, they may identify learning sessions they intend to observe, meetings they want to hold and when they will write their section of the report. In many cases, however, the lead inspector will direct members of the team to specific aspects of provision.
- familiarise themselves with the inspection notebook and forms to be completed.
- contact the lead inspector, not the provider, to query arrangements for the inspection.
- give as much notice as possible to IPDT if they are unable to take part in the inspection.

DURING AN INSPECTION

Responsibilities

The lead inspector has overall responsibility for managing the inspection and communicating with the provider. Many inspection teams also include an assisting lead inspector. The assisting lead inspector shares responsibility with the lead inspector for the quality of the inspection process, for ensuring that inspectors' judgements are valid, and that the inspection report is clear and well written. Some of the specific responsibilities of the different parties are as follows:

The lead inspector

- decides on the specific duties of the assisting lead inspector, if there is one. A number of duties are likely to relate to quality assurance of the inspection.
- convenes and chairs team meetings and manages the feedback meeting.
- liaises with the nominee throughout the inspection.
- participates in a broad range of inspection activities.
- briefs the inspection team about the provider and operational aspects of the inspection.
- ensures inspection judgements are valid and substantiated by firm evidence.
- makes sure that the nominee is informed of emerging inspection judgements.
- manages the grading meeting and ensures that provisional grades are agreed by the team.
- discusses any complex or problematic issues with an IM.
- plans activities relating to the quality assurance of the inspection process.
- supports and advises members of the inspection team.
- ensures that draft contributions to the inspection report are written in plain English and set out clearly the findings of the inspection.
- gives feedback to associate inspectors on their performance, in accordance with ALL guidelines.

All inspectors – inspection visits before the final inspection period

- Read the briefing information sent by the lead inspector and follow any instructions. If necessary telephone the lead inspector to discuss arrangements.
- Arrive punctually at the provider's site. Contact relevant provider staff. Attend any briefing given by the provider. Confirm the arrangements for inspection visits.
- Carry out inspection activities as agreed with the lead inspector and nominee.
- Complete relevant sections of the inspection notebook.
- Where advised by the lead inspector, and in association with other team members, provide daily informal feedback to the provider's nominee or their representative.
- Telephone the lead inspector to seek clarifications on any aspects of the inspection.
- At the end of any inspection visit before the main inspection week, summarise evidence and record emerging judgements using the inspection notebook. Forward the summary of findings and, when instructed, any evidence to the lead inspector.

All inspectors – at the start of the final inspection period

- Arrive punctually for the initial team briefing unless alternative briefing arrangements are made.
- Ensure understanding of the individual inspection schedule. Check its practicality with relevant provider staff.
- Confirm that they have information and evidence from inspection visits over time. Incorporate any earlier findings into the main body of evidence.

All inspectors – during the final inspection period

- Inspect the provision in accordance with the schedule for the inspection. Keep to the agreed timings as closely as possible and give advance notice of late or early arrival for appointments.
- Agree any major changes to the inspection schedule with the lead inspector and the nominee.
- Collect evidence about the standard of learners' work and the quality of the provision from a range of sources, including evidence from previous inspection visits, cross-checking the evidence whenever possible.
- Keep a record of evidence in the inspection notebook.
- Check regularly that inspection is in accordance with, and covers all relevant aspects of, the *Common Inspection Framework*.
- Include judgements on literacy, numeracy and language support. (See p.37, Report writing.)
- Where the provision includes children or vulnerable adults, collect information and provide judgements relating to the five outcomes specified in the Children Act 2004. (See p.47, reporting requirements under the Children Act 2004.)
- Where appropriate, include judgements about the use of e-learning.
- Summarise their emerging judgements each day. If possible, discuss them with the rest of the inspection team, including the nominee. (See p.30, guidance on team meetings.) Complete the daily summary forms.
- Accumulate valid evidence over the course of the inspection in order to be able to reach secure judgements. (See pp.29-30, guidance on making judgements.)
- Ask the nominee for any additional information. If necessary, seek the agreement of the lead inspector to further amend the planned inspection schedule.
- Discuss their emerging judgements with the lead inspector, nominee and, where required, the inspection team, before the grading meeting.
- Produce a draft of their inspection report section(s). (See p.37, Report writing.)
- Agree the grade(s) for each area inspected with other members of the inspection team. (See p.31, guidance on grading meetings.)
- Present a summary of the judgements at the inspection feedback meeting. (See p.36, guidance on feedback of inspection findings.)
- Give all the evidence collected during the inspection, the completed inspection notebook, other forms, and the final report to the lead inspector at the end of the inspection.
- Participate in the inspection quality improvement process (IQI) at the end of the inspection. (See p.39, Inspection quality and improvement.)

The provider's nominee:

- is usually a senior member of staff who knows the provision well and understands how it is managed.
- is familiar with the provider's self-assessment process and report.
- has prepared the provider's staff and others, such as employers and workplace supervisors, for the inspection, so that they can help inspectors gather valid evidence.
- ensures that the lead inspector is briefed on health and safety matters for all sites to be visited by inspectors.
- ensures that all staff and, where appropriate, governors, board members, trustees or other relevant parties, co-operate with inspectors.
- attends meetings of inspectors as required and provides information needed by the inspection team.
- registers with the lead inspector any concerns about inspection procedures and findings.
- helps to resolve any difficulties which arise, in liaison with the lead inspector.
- completes the inspection evaluation form that accompanies the published inspection report and returns it to the ALI to assist in quality improvement.

AFTER INSPECTION

The lead inspector's tasks

At the end of each inspection visit, the lead inspector:

- completes the electronic inspection review and attendance sheet (IP11) including associate inspector grades and submits it to IPDT.

After the inspection, the lead inspector:

- completes an associate inspector assessment form (IP09) by exception for any associate inspector whose performance is outstanding or unsatisfactory.
- signs off a trainee inspector assessment form for each trainee inspector, and sends the forms to IPDT.
- prepares a draft inspection report.
- forwards the inspection report to RPD, using the e-mail address **moderation@ali.gov.uk**, by 17.00 on the Friday of the week following the end of the inspection.
- keeps to hand a copy of the draft report and inspection evidence where possible, during the second week after inspection (the moderation week), in case queries arise.
- responds to any queries raised by the moderating IM during the moderation week. If required, amends the report and resubmits it to RPD or the moderating IM as requested.
- explains to the provider, verbally and in writing, any changes in grade that result from moderation.
- sends a completed health and safety risk assessment to IPDT.
- ensures that inspection evidence is stored in accordance with working instructions.

Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to ensure that inspection judgements and grades are fully explained in the text of the inspection report and that the evidence for them is sufficient. Moderation also ensures consistency between judgements made about similar types of provision in different parts of the country. The inspection report is first moderated by an IM and can subsequently be moderated by ALI directors.

SECTION 2

Guidance on aspects of inspection

Gathering information

Before contacting the provider, inspectors will have a range of information from the pre-inspection analysis (PIA) form and the provider data report. This information is derived from funding bodies; link inspectors' intelligence; previous inspection/reinspection reports; and the provider's self-assessment report. Inspectors must contact providers very soon after the inspection allocation to enable the IRF to be completed and to alert IPDT to the inspection resource requirements, particularly where inspection visits over time are proposed.

To ensure appropriate resources for inspection, lead inspectors need to gather additional information when they first contact providers, usually by telephone. Information gathered at the planning and preparation stage makes a significant difference to the smooth running of the inspection and the workloads of inspectors during inspection.

Information to gather

The information collected through the initial telephone call should include:

- which learning programmes are provided.
- the total number of learners in each area of learning, including contributory areas. Sufficient information should be collected in order to be able to determine whether contributory areas need to be inspected and graded separately.
- a detailed breakdown of clusters of learners and the geographical distribution for each area of learning/contributory area, including employer bases.
- the locations of provider training sites.
- whether specialisms are needed for any area of learning or learning contexts.
- if many learners work for large companies or for one company. Sampling could be reduced in such cases. Some learners may be seen in focus groups as well as individually.
- when and where specific training or other activities take place. Observation of some activities, such as off-job training or induction, may be possible in the six- to eight-week period before the inspection starts.
- whether a provider has individual contracts with many local LSCs/Jobcentre Plus regions, and which one will be the lead. Invite a representative from this body to the planning and feedback meetings.
- whether the findings match the notional resource allocation on the PIA. If not, why not?
- whether any other publicly funded activity takes place, for example European Social Fund, or single regeneration budget projects.

If the provider has fewer than 20 learners, the lead inspector will consult their inspection manager in order to determine the most appropriate approach to the inspection.

Wherever possible, the information gathered through verbal telephone contact with the provider should be confirmed by e-mail.

CoVEs

Lead inspectors should ask the provider whether their provision includes a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). CoVEs are inspected as part of the regular programme of work-based learning inspections, as long as the area of learning with which the CoVE is linked is being inspected. Judgements about the CoVE will be included in the overall judgements about the area of learning. The CoVE will not be separately graded unless, of course, it comprises the entire area of learning. The inspection report will indicate that a CoVE exists and will include judgements about its quality.

The composition and deployment of the inspection team

- Based on an assessment of the pre-inspection analysis report and information obtained from the provider, an inspection team is put together taking into account the type and scale of the provision, and the geographical spread to be inspected. In the case of national providers or other dispersed provision, the lead inspector decides on the proportion of learning venues to be sampled. (See p.43, National inspections.)
- The lead inspector submits an IRF to the IM, who amends the IRF if appropriate and approves the final team. The IM then sends the IRF to IPDT, which contacts associate inspectors to resource the inspection. To enable IPDT to make an appropriate match, the lead inspector should specify contributory areas of learning, dates, inspection activities and locations for each inspector. IRFs for reduced intensity inspections should detail all areas of learning, not just those that are to be included in the sample.
- The specialisms and learning contexts required in the team should be made clear. For example, 'plumbing' should be specified rather than the generic 'construction'.
- The IRF should indicate where inspectors are to be located.
- Areas of learning with fewer than 10 learners are not normally inspected, except in providers that have no areas of learning with 10 or more learners. Areas of learning that are rarely seen may be inspected at the request of an IM or area of learning co-ordinator, in order to contribute to the Chief Inspector's Annual Report.
- Reduced intensity inspections require lead inspectors to decide which areas of learning or contributory areas to include in their sample, and why. The rationale for these decisions should be included in the pre-inspection report.
- The lead inspector and assisting lead inspector normally carry out some inspection activity themselves. In the case of particularly large or complex inspections, the lead inspector or the assisting lead inspector, or both, may need to concentrate solely on managing the inspection and co-ordinating inspection activities.
- When inspectors are not needed for the full duration of the inspection, their work should be planned for the later stages, to enable them to take part in grading discussions.

- Some inspection activity may take place outside the period scheduled as the inspection week (or weeks), to accommodate the needs of the provider, or to enable observation of activities that are not taking place during a final inspection period. Such activity should happen before, rather than after, the final inspection period, so that findings can be considered by the inspection team at the end of the inspection. (See p.31, Guidance on inspection over time.)

The planning meeting

The purpose of the planning meeting is to agree the detail of the inspection with the provider. Good planning is the key to a smooth inspection. The meeting is also an opportunity to meet the provider's staff and answer their questions about the inspection process. The planning meeting is attended by the lead inspector, the nominee, and where appropriate, a representative of the LSC, Jobcentre Plus or another relevant body. The provider may invite additional staff if they have a role in planning the inspection. The planning meeting may be attended by the assisting lead inspector.

The planning meeting is likely to cover the following points:

- The lead inspector confirms that the inspection will be based on the *Common Inspection Framework* and refers the provider to the ALI's guidance on the framework. Where pre-inspection analysis has taken place, the lead inspector explains the outcome of this process.
- Where this information is available, the lead inspector gives the provider summary information about each person on the team. The provider is asked to inform the lead inspector as soon as possible if the inclusion of any member of the inspection team raises conflict of interest or any other concerns. The ALI has the final decision on the composition of the inspection team.
- The provider confirms who will act as nominee and that they understand the role. The lead inspector checks that the nominee is an appropriate person for the job. The lead inspector checks that the nominee has received a copy of the ALI's Inspection Toolkit.
- The lead inspector makes sure that the scope of the inspection is fully understood. They explain which learning programmes, areas of learning and contributory areas of learning are to be inspected and which are to be awarded a contributory grade. They also check which venues and learners are covered by the inspection and that all relevant subcontractors are identified.
- The lead inspector finds out what activities, such as learning sessions, assessment sessions and progress reviews, can be observed during the final inspection period and during the eight-week period leading up to this. If it adds value to the inspection process, the lead inspector can identify activities suitable for inspection over time; otherwise, all observation of inspection activities takes place during the final inspection period. The lead inspector may also consider suggestions from the provider in this respect.
- The lead inspector selects the sample of learners to interview, learning venues or workplaces to visit, portfolios to examine and so on. (See p.21, Sampling.)

- The lead inspector draws up outline schedules for each inspector including, where relevant, inspection activities during the eight weeks leading up to the final inspection period. The lead inspector should point out that it may be necessary to make amendments to the inspection schedule at a later date.
- With the nominee, the lead inspector decides the start time for the first day and subsequent days of the inspection, and the times for daily team meetings, the grading meeting and the final inspection feedback. Where there is inspection over time, the lead inspector agrees arrangements for these inspection activities, including inspector briefings and provider feedback.
- The lead inspector checks that the data forms have been completed and, where appropriate, agrees arrangements for the validation of data supplied by the provider. The lead inspector and the nominee agree the validity of the data. The lead inspector advises the provider that data may need to be updated at the time of the inspection.
- The lead inspector asks for a suitable room to be made available to inspectors during the inspection. The lead inspector also ensures that the inspection team will have access to refreshments and facilities, such as a photocopier.
- The lead inspector details which documents will need to be made available in the room to be used by inspectors during the inspection. The lead inspector should minimise the need for the provider to prepare documentation specifically for the inspection.
- The lead inspector should identify the risks and hazards that inspectors may encounter during the inspection and agree how they can be minimised.
- The lead inspector should arrange for the provider to undertake a health and safety briefing at the beginning of the inspection.
- The lead inspector explains how staff are given feedback throughout the inspection and refers to the daily team meeting at which the nominee is present. Feedback arrangements for any inspection activities carried out before the final inspection period should be made. The lead inspector explains the purpose and format of the final inspection feedback meeting.
- The lead inspector explains the nature of feedback given to teachers and trainers after a learning session observation. The feedback is not intended to be a comprehensive review of a teacher's or trainer's professional capabilities. The grade awarded will not be divulged.
- The lead inspector should explain that judgements on individual learning sessions and the feedback given to teachers and trainers is confidential and will not be reported to the provider. Similarly, the lead inspector should explain that comments made during interviews with staff, learners and other groups are provided in confidence and will not be attributed to named individuals.
- The lead inspector outlines how and when the inspection report is published and stresses that all inspection findings are moderated and edited, and are provisional until they have been published. The provider will have four working days to check the factual accuracy of the final draft.
- The lead inspector checks that the provider has received a copy of the ALI's complaints procedure, *Making a Complaint*, and, if not, provides a copy.
- The lead inspector explains that the provider can evaluate the inspection by completing an evaluation form that is sent with the published inspection report.

Sampling

A provider in its second cycle of ALI inspection will have the scale of the inspection determined by factors including its previous inspection grades and trends in learner success rates. Particularly in the case of providers with a good track record, the lead inspector will need to decide which areas of learning and aspects of provision to include in the inspection. The aim is to represent a balanced view of the provider's work.

Consideration should be given to:

- inclusion of the most significant area of learning in terms of learner numbers.
- inclusion of the area of learning that constitutes the provider's main business (e.g. health care in an NHS Trust).
- inclusion of areas of learning or contributory areas seldom inspected.
- advice on the inclusion of areas of learning or types of provision necessary in order to maintain balanced national coverage.
- the provider's view of what will provide a representative cross-section of their work.
- any advice from funding organisations.

Once the scope of the inspection has been determined, the lead inspector agrees with the nominee how the provision will be sampled. The sample should satisfy both parties that a fair reflection of the provider's work will be included. The lead inspector makes the final selection of learners and observations of learning. The nominee should not select the sample. Where feasible, providers should not be notified in advance exactly which learning sessions will be observed.

Samples should take account of the demographic profile of the learner group, the different qualifications or courses in the area of learning, and different stages of progress. There is no formula to determine the minimum size of the sample. Other inspectors may not alter the size or composition of the sample without the lead inspector's approval. It is not necessary to include all sites or all regions of the country for multi-site providers.

If learners who have been included in a sample are not available at the time of inspection, the inspector should establish whether those concerned are making satisfactory progress.

Areas of learning that are not to be reported separately should not be ignored. Overall retention and achievement rates should be reviewed. The inspection of leadership and management should take into account as broad a range of the provision as possible. Where resources allow, lead inspectors might consider including single-day visits by specialists in other areas of learning as part of the inspection.

The pre-inspection report

The pre-inspection report assists in planning and outlining the scope of an inspection. It is an evaluative report of pre-inspection evidence and enables the inspection team to have a clear understanding of the provider before inspection begins. It helps inspectors to prepare for their work and provides clear briefing for the inspection team. It offers the provider information about the scope and assumptions for inspection.

The pre-inspection report provides:

- an outline of the provider's main characteristics including previous inspection history.
- a notification of the scope and intensity of inspection including a rationale for those areas selected.
- an evaluation of pre-inspection evidence and the self-assessment process and report.
- an outline of the key areas for investigation during the inspection.
- an outline of the inspection programme and activities including specific information for inspectors who will be required to inspect on their own.
- information of findings related to risk assessment including health and safety.
- an outline of domestic arrangements for the inspection process.

The pre-inspection report is based on:

- information used in pre-inspection analysis, such as information from previous inspections; quality monitoring visit information; demographic and geographical information; and success and retention rates.
- the provider's data report.
- the provider's self-assessment report and development plan.
- local LSC and/or Jobcentre Plus information provided through the regional link inspector and other contextual documents.
- further information from the provider, including that gained at the planning meeting.

Format for pre-inspection report

Section 1: Inspection context: general background, characteristics of the provider, and previous inspection history. The summary of past performance will illustrate the basis for the pre-inspection analysis and the choice of inspection model. This information will also support inspectors in making judgements about the provider's capacity to make further improvements.

Section 2: Scope of inspection: outline of areas of learning to be inspected including contributory areas of learning to be graded. This section will identify the level of inspection and the areas which will not be inspected. It provides information about the focus of inspection activities and the basis for sampling activities, and must be agreed with the provider during the planning meeting.

Section 3: Inspection themes: provides focus through identifying the main issues to be investigated during the inspection process. The analysis is to be made against the *Common Inspection Framework* key questions and will support the identification of key priorities for inspection. It will take account of any apparent mismatch between performance data and self-assessment judgements. The analysis will support efficient and effective targeting of inspection resources.

Key Questions	Themes to explore	How to explore	Who will explore them
KQ1			
KQ2			
KQ3			
KQ4			
KQ5			

Section 4: Outline of inspection programme and activities: this section is particularly important in identifying the focus of specific inspection activities, including any information for inspectors who will be required to inspect on their own. This section should identify any key requirements the lead inspector may have, including feedback arrangements; the format of briefing for any inspectors who may join the team later; use of the inspection notebook; sampling; and any specific requirements related to supporting the right touch inspection.

Section 5: Risk assessment including health and safety.

Section 6: Domestic arrangements.

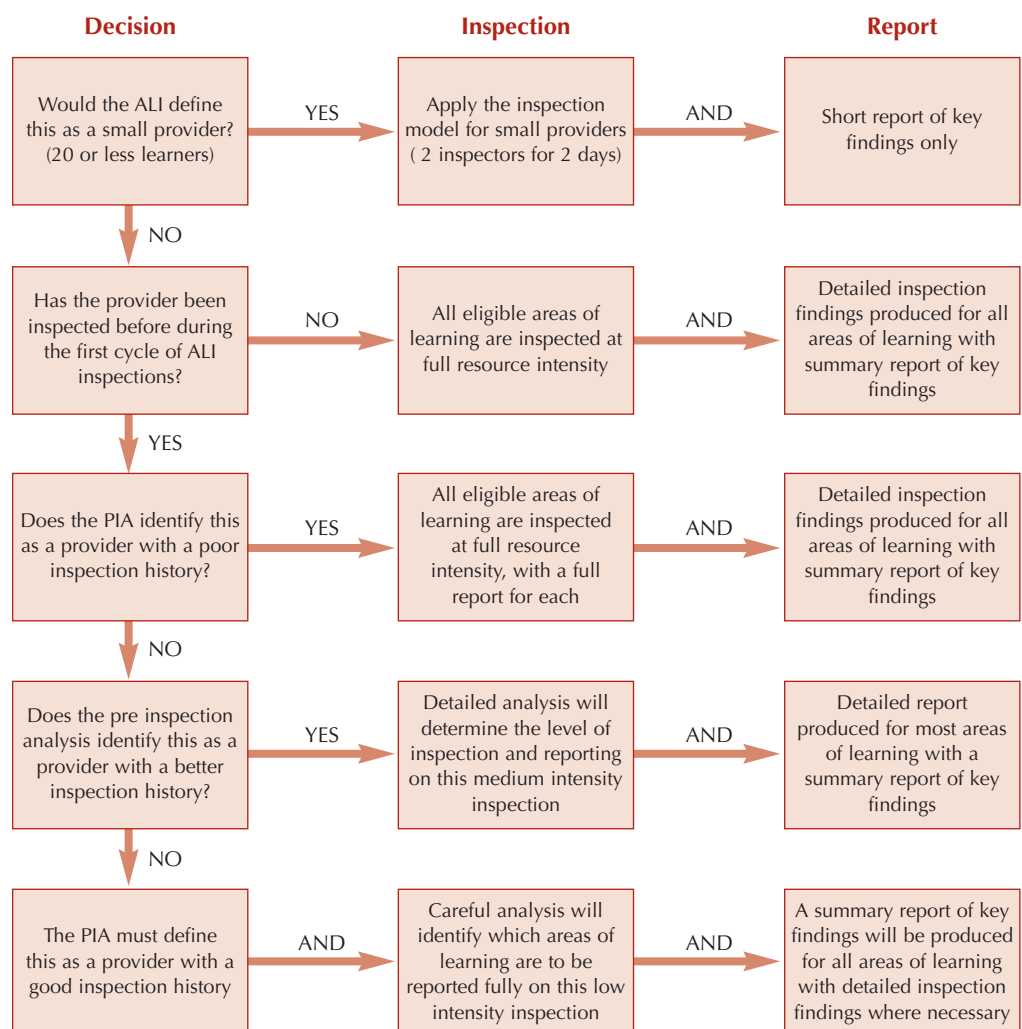
Applying the right touch

Inspection intensity and reporting

The intensity of inspection activity and reporting will depend on the size of the provider, whether the provider had been inspected before, and the outcome of any pre-inspection analysis (PIA). Inspection will also respond to funding body concerns, seek to recognise providers' quality improvement initiatives and place emphasis on the identification and dissemination of good practice.

The right touch must allow reliable judgements to be made. As a guide, the following table defines the level of inspection intensity and reporting.

Applying the right touch - inspection intensity and reporting



Collecting and recording evidence

Observations of learning

The intensity of inspection will vary in cycle 2 and this may affect the approach to observations of learning. The lead inspector makes the final selection of learning sessions to observe. Where feasible, providers should not be notified in advance exactly which learning sessions will be observed.

Areas of learning that are not reported on separately should, where possible, contribute to the overall evidence base. Observations of learning in these areas may be carried out and judgements included in the key findings.

The extent to which inspectors can observe learning depends on the type of provider and the nature of the provision. In the case of a course or programme based entirely in a classroom or workshop, most evidence is gathered through observation of the learning process. Other types of provision may afford fewer opportunities to observe learning directly. Inspectors need to identify other ways of gathering evidence, such as observation of learners carrying out practical activities, interviews with learners and examination of their work.

A single grade on the four-point scale is awarded to each learning session observed. The grade should reflect the overall quality of the session and take account of the quality of teaching, the extent of learning, and learners' attainment. Inspectors must not be dogmatic about what makes a successful session. They should not approach an observation with a fixed view. Inspectors must be prepared for alternative styles of teaching and learning which might be as effective as more familiar styles.

Lesson observations should lead to judgements about the quality of teaching/training and learning, what learners have achieved, whether it is appropriate in terms of the overall programme and significant in terms of challenging the learner. Judgements about the effectiveness of teaching and learning and other features of the learning sessions may refer to:

- planning.
- the extent to which the session relates to previous sessions and other work.
- the extent to which learners understand the purpose of the session and are involved in it.
- management of the session: teaching and learning methods; use of time; and the control exercised by the teacher/trainer.
- relevant knowledge and expertise of the teacher/trainer.
- enthusiastic and interesting teaching that motivates learners.
- effective checks on learning and encouragement of learners' contributions.
- appropriateness of learning activities to learning objectives.
- awareness of different needs including additional learning support needs.
- approaches to equality and diversity in planning and delivery of the lesson.
- standards of work in the session.
- evaluation of learners' oral, written and practical work.

- discussions with learners about what they know, understand, are learning, and what they can now do.
- extent to which effective use is made of learning resources, and the quality of the resources themselves.
- the quality of accommodation and other physical resources.
- evaluation and review of teaching and learning.
- punctuality and attendance of learners.

First and foremost, inspectors assess learning outcomes. Judgements are required about the features which made the session successful or not. If the learning outcomes are unsatisfactory, it is unlikely that the session as a whole can be anything other than unsatisfactory, regardless of other factors.

Lesson observation protocol for inspectors

Identify opportunities for observing learning sessions as early as possible. Ensure a sufficient coverage of any contributory areas of learning that are to be graded. Inspectors should provide lesson observation profiles for contributory areas of learning in notebooks. Although these profiles will not be published in inspection reports, they contribute to the analysis of the quality of teaching and learning in the contributory areas.

Where appropriate, the observation sample is selected by the lead inspector. Otherwise, inspectors select a sample of lessons based on information in the pre-inspection report and from timetables supplied by the provider. This selection should be agreed with the lead inspector at the beginning of the inspection. If a list provided by the lead inspector does not appear to provide a representative sample of sessions available, the inspector involved should discuss changes with the lead.

Only sessions in which learning takes place should be graded. These may include tutorials, practical sessions, and on-the-job or off-the-job training sessions.

Avoid observing more than one or two sessions led by the same teacher or trainer. Ask to see the session plan, a copy of the scheme of work, any supporting material, and the records of attendance.

Inspectors should not participate in the learning or assessment process, and should be as unobtrusive as possible. Stay long enough in a learning session to reach valid judgements on the effectiveness of the teaching/training and learning.

Vary the pattern of observations. Observe the start of some sessions to see the introductions and how latecomers are dealt with. Observe later stages to see how the teacher or trainer summarises what has been taught and learnt, concludes the session and prepares learners for the next session.

Focus on the standard of learners' work. Wherever possible, look at some learners' folders, talk to learners and look at their practical work during the session.

If you observe any unsafe or dangerous practice, use professional judgement about any, or the right degree of, intervention to make.

Make notes during the session using the evidence form for all inspection activities. Record grades using the following four-point scale:

grade 1	outstanding
grade 2	good
grade 3	satisfactory
grade 4	inadequate

The contemporary record of the observation constitutes the evidence about the session. It should not be copied out later, so must be legibly written.

At the end of your observation (or by arrangement later) give each teacher or trainer some feedback on what you have seen. The grade awarded for the session should not be divulged.

Documentary evidence

The inspection judgements cannot be made just by examining documents. Documents, however, can corroborate other evidence. The ALI's guidance on interpreting the *Common Inspection Framework* suggests various sources of evidence under each of the framework's key questions. The provider must make key documents available to the inspection team. Inspectors may want to see other documents during the inspection and should ask the nominee as early as possible. Do not take any of the provider's documents off the premises. Keep a copy of key documentary evidence. (See p.50, Recording and storing evidence.) Types of documentary evidence will include:

- The provider's self-assessment report and development plans.
- Reports from internal and external verifiers, as appropriate.
- Learners' files, attendance records, meeting notes, complaint records, policy documents and management data, which must be examined.

Examining learners' work

- Examine a sample of learners' practical and written work at various levels and across different types of provision.
- Discuss work with a sample of learners.
- Observe learners carrying out practical activities.
- Where relevant, observe learners carrying out tasks at work and their achievements at work.
- Look at work in progress and work that has been completed and assessed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of assignments.
- Make judgements about the standard of learners' work and its appropriateness to the course or programme.
- Determine whether assessment is rigorous and fair, and evaluate the quality of the written and spoken feedback given to learners.
- Make sure that the work has been carried out by the learners themselves.

Interviews with learners and staff

- Prepare for interviews in advance.
- Take account of people's individual circumstances (for example, any disability or sensitivity) when arranging and conducting interviews.
- Conduct interviews in a place that is sufficiently private, ensuring that interviews are not overheard.
- When interviewing learners or staff at work, be sensitive to the disruption this can cause their employer.
- Explain to the interviewee who you are and what you are doing. Make sure that the interviewee knows that you are inspecting the provider, not them.
- Explain that learners' views may be quoted directly in reports, but that individuals will not be identified.
- Mainly use open questions and avoid terms that the interviewee may not understand. In particular, avoid jargon and acronyms used by inspectors.
- Give interviewees time to collect their thoughts.
- Make a note of key messages and an overall evaluation on the evidence forms.
- Allow interviewees to make further points that they consider relevant.
- Compare evidence gathered during interviews with similar evidence obtained from other sources, looking for means of corroboration.
- Continuously review whether the chosen sample of learners or staff is appropriate. Take care to minimise the number of meetings with a single member of staff.
- As with observations, the contemporary record of your interviews forms the evidence.
- Emphasis that comments made during interviews with staff, learners and other groups are made in confidence and will not be attributed to named individuals.

Recording evidence

- Inspectors' records are an essential source of evidence in the event of any complaint. The evidence must be clearly presented, detailed and provide sufficient support for judgements. (See p.50, Recording and storing evidence.)
- The inspection notebook is a permanent record of inspection judgements and the evidence upon which those judgements are based. Make notes of any key points, a summary of the main evidence, and the findings as they emerge during the inspection.
- Lead inspectors should ensure that evidence gathered during inspection visits over time is summarised using the appropriate section of the inspection notebook and, where appropriate, forwarded to inspectors involved in the final inspection period.
- The contents of the inspection notebook are used by the lead inspector when compiling the final report. The notebook should include instances of good practice, which the lead inspector refers for the Excalibur team to pursue.
- The completed notebook together with any additional evidence forms must be given to the lead inspector at the end of the inspection.

Collecting evidence for other inspectors

- Each inspector must pass to others on their team any evidence that may be relevant to them.
- In particular, the inspector reporting on leadership and management relies heavily on other inspectors for evidence from areas of learning, such as judgements on how well teaching and learning is managed and led.
- Area of learning inspectors must provide the quality assurance and equality of opportunity inspectors with judgements on these aspects as they apply to their area of learning.
- All inspectors must use the inspection notebook to record key findings. These notes will be used by the lead inspector when they prepare the inspection report.

Receiving evidence gathered during inspection visits over time

- Inspectors carrying out inspection activities during the final inspection period should consider evidence gathered during inspection visits over time. This should be used to help identify inspection themes and be merged with evidence from the final inspection period.
- Where inspection over time has reached secure judgements on any aspect of provision, no further evidence need be considered during the final inspection period. Inspectors must make every effort to avoid duplication of work.
- If, during the final inspection period, an inspector disagrees with interim judgements made during earlier visits over time, they must agree how to deal with this with the lead inspector. There is specific guidance on how to deal with improvements to provision which take place during the inspection period.

Making judgements

Strengths

These are features of the provision that are above and beyond what is expected and lead to a more than satisfactory learning experience for learners.

Weaknesses

These are features of the provision that are below what is expected and lead to a less than satisfactory learning experience for learners.

Bullet points

Strengths and weaknesses are expressed in bullet points during the inspection and in the report. Short, single-theme, jargon-free bullet points must be formed as soon as the judgement is secure.

Areas of learning

Each area of learning is graded separately. Contributory areas of learning may be awarded separate grades before the grading of the overall area. The grade awarded is

determined mainly on the balance of the strengths and weaknesses, taking into account aspects of provision that are satisfactory. Contributory grades may be awarded for different types of programme.

Leadership and management

The grade for leadership and management is determined on the balance of the strengths and weaknesses in leadership and management, taking into account aspects of provision that are satisfactory. An overall grade for leadership and management is decided first. Then, contributory grades are arrived at for equality of opportunity and quality assurance. In line with the *Common Inspection Framework*, the grades for leadership and management will reflect the quality of the areas of learning.

Meetings

Team meetings

An initial briefing allows inspectors and the nominee to raise and clarify queries about the inspection schedule and arrangements. It normally takes place at the start of the inspection. A representative of the provider should give background to the provider's work and highlight any aspects to which they wish the inspection team's attention to be drawn, including aspects of health and safety.

For inspections over time, and where team members are widely dispersed, lead inspectors should consider alternative methods of briefing the team, such as CD-ROM, videos or briefings from a substitute nominee.

The lead inspector arranges a schedule of meetings for the team. The purpose of these meetings is to enable inspectors to share emerging findings with each other and the nominee.

Only inspectors and the nominee may attend these meetings. A substitute nominee may be allowed when circumstances prevent the nominee attending.

In inspections where team members are widely dispersed, alternative arrangements may be made for inspectors to share information each day by e-mail, fax or telephone.

As the inspection progresses, daily meetings allow inspectors to raise queries and problems, discuss progress and share inspection findings with each other and the nominee. These meetings give the nominee an opportunity to correct factual inaccuracies, to query emerging judgements and to provide additional information.

- Meetings should not last an unreasonable length of time.
- Before the meeting, inspectors should make notes of emerging judgements.
- Inspectors should keep their feedback to the team as brief as possible, concentrating solely on emerging strengths and weaknesses.
- Matters that require lengthy discussion with the nominee or other staff should be dealt with outside the meeting.
- Inspectors should not modify or dilute the message they are giving. Possible problem areas should be signalled as they arise.

- The nominee may take notes.
- The nominee should be aware that the judgements shared at the team meeting are provisional, although as the inspection progresses, the judgements become more secure.
- The nominee should register any disagreements or concerns at these meetings, so that the team can address them before provisional grades are agreed at the final grading meeting.

Feedback during inspection visits over time

- An inspection visit over time is part of the evidence collection process. Inspectors should only provide feedback on those specific aspects which they have inspected, such as observations of teaching or reviews. No grades should be shared with teachers or providers' nominees.
- Daily feedback during inspection visits over time should include a description of the day's activities, the evidence base, emerging judgements and themes to be explored later in the inspection.

Grading meetings

- The purpose of the grading meeting is to clarify inspection judgements and decide grades. Grading decisions are the responsibility of the whole team, not just the inspector responsible for inspecting and reporting on the area concerned. The aim should be to reach a consensus. Those inspectors least involved in inspecting a particular area are asked to propose a grade first.
- The lead inspector chairs the grading meeting. All inspectors and the nominee should be present. Exceptionally, for example because of illness, a substitute may attend instead of the nominee. The nominee is not involved in deciding grades.
- Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements. The descriptors for the four grades are:

grade 1	outstanding
grade 2	good
grade 3	satisfactory
grade 4	inadequate

- Each area of learning is discussed and graded in turn. A grade is then decided for leadership and management. Once the leadership and management grade has been agreed, the team grades the overall effectiveness of the provider.
- Some inspectors might join the inspection briefly, for example to inspect a contributory area of learning, and will not attend the final grading meeting. A meeting to agree their grade will be held before they leave. This should include the contributory area inspector, the lead inspector, the nominee and, where possible, the inspector who is reporting on the overall area of learning.
- Contributory area of learning grades will be agreed by the team before the overall area of learning grade. Grades are decided mainly on the basis of strengths and

weaknesses, taking into account satisfactory elements of the provision. Each member of the team should be able to see a written set of bullet points for all the areas of learning and contributory areas of learning to be graded. Where appropriate, funding stream grades will be agreed after each contributory area of learning or area of learning grade is awarded.

- When all team members understand the judgements for the area, and acknowledge the weight to be given to each, the team agrees a grade. The lead inspector helps the inspectors to agree on a grade. The process of deliberation continues until grades for all areas have been decided. The lead inspector must be satisfied that all grading decisions are justified. The nominee listens to their discussion but may not contribute to decisions on grading.
- Draft text should be used by the team to agree the contributory grades for equality of opportunity and quality improvement.
- Directly after the quality improvement grade has been agreed, the team should agree judgements about the reliability of the self-assessment process and the provider's capacity to make further improvements, including the effectiveness of any steps taken to improve since the last inspection. The nominee listens to the discussion about the evidence base but will not participate in the decision-making process.
- When all the area of learning and leadership and management grades have been agreed, the inspection team agrees the overall effectiveness of the provider, using the four-point scale. The nominee observes this part of the meeting, but does not participate in agreeing this grade.
- Key challenges for the provider will be discussed and agreed by the inspection team, including the nominee.
- The grading meeting should conclude with 'what learners like' and 'what learners think can be improved'. These must be the views of learners, not inspectors. Where possible, the learners' wording should be used.
- The lead inspector collects all papers that have been used for grading from inspectors and the nominee.
- Grades at this point are subject to moderation and remain so until the report is published.
- The lead inspector must inform the provider of any grade amendments as soon as possible.
- If the grade profile meets the condition for full reinspection, then the lead inspector indicates this to the nominee, explaining that the final decision rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Making judgements about the rigour and accuracy of the self-assessment process

The inspection team will agree the judgement about the degree of confidence inspectors have in the self-assessment process at the grading meeting, directly after the quality improvement grade has been agreed. To help the team make this judgement, the inspector reporting on quality improvement will propose judgements about the self-assessment process and report, which should include the following:

- how inclusive the process is (use of staff, learners' views, subcontractors etc);
- how well data is used to make appropriate judgements about retention, achievement, completion and job outcomes;
- the regularity of the process in identifying strengths and weaknesses in a timely way;
- how self-critical and accurate the process is;
- how appropriate the identified strengths and weaknesses are;
- how complete the report and judgements are, (e.g. are there significant issues that are omitted from the report?);
- whether the strengths and weaknesses in the report have a significant impact on learners or are superficial.

In the inspection report the judgement will be worded in one of the following ways:

'The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.'

'The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.'

'The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.'

'The inspection team had no confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.'

A selection of supplementary judgements should be added to the relevant section of the report to help the reader understand the rationale behind the overall judgement that has been made.

Making judgements about the provider's capacity to make further improvements, including the effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection

During the quality improvement section of the grading meeting, following the decision about the confidence in the self-assessment process, the team should agree a judgement about the provider's capacity to make further improvements. This judgement will be based on the past and current position of the provider, rather than making predictions about what might happen in the future. Where the provider has been inspected by the ALI in cycle 1, this will take into account the effectiveness of any steps which the provider has taken to improve quality and raise standards since the last inspection. The inspector reporting on quality improvement should lead the discussion and assist the team in making the judgement. This input should be informed by:

- trends over time in retention and achievement rates;
- the inspection grade profile when compared with previous published reports (where applicable);
- the extent to which the provider has addressed the weaknesses identified in the provider's previous inspection report (where applicable);
- the effectiveness of the provider's self-assessment report and development plans over time in addressing weaknesses they have identified themselves.

In the inspection report this judgement will be worded in one of the following ways:

'The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to maintain the high quality of provision.'

'The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.'

'The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.'

'The provider has demonstrated that it is in a poor position to make improvements.'

The first statement should only be used for providers with outstanding grades. The initial statement should be followed by additional judgements to explain why this decision was made.

Grading the overall effectiveness of the provider

When all the area of learning and leadership and management grades have been agreed, the inspection team will agree the overall effectiveness of the provider using the four-point scale. While the nominee is present to observe this part of the grading meeting, the nominee does not participate in agreeing this grade.

The grade profile given by the team for the inspection will be used to make the overall effectiveness judgement, using the following guidance. It is important that the headline grades for each area of learning and leadership and management rather than contributory and funding stream grades are used when making this judgement.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

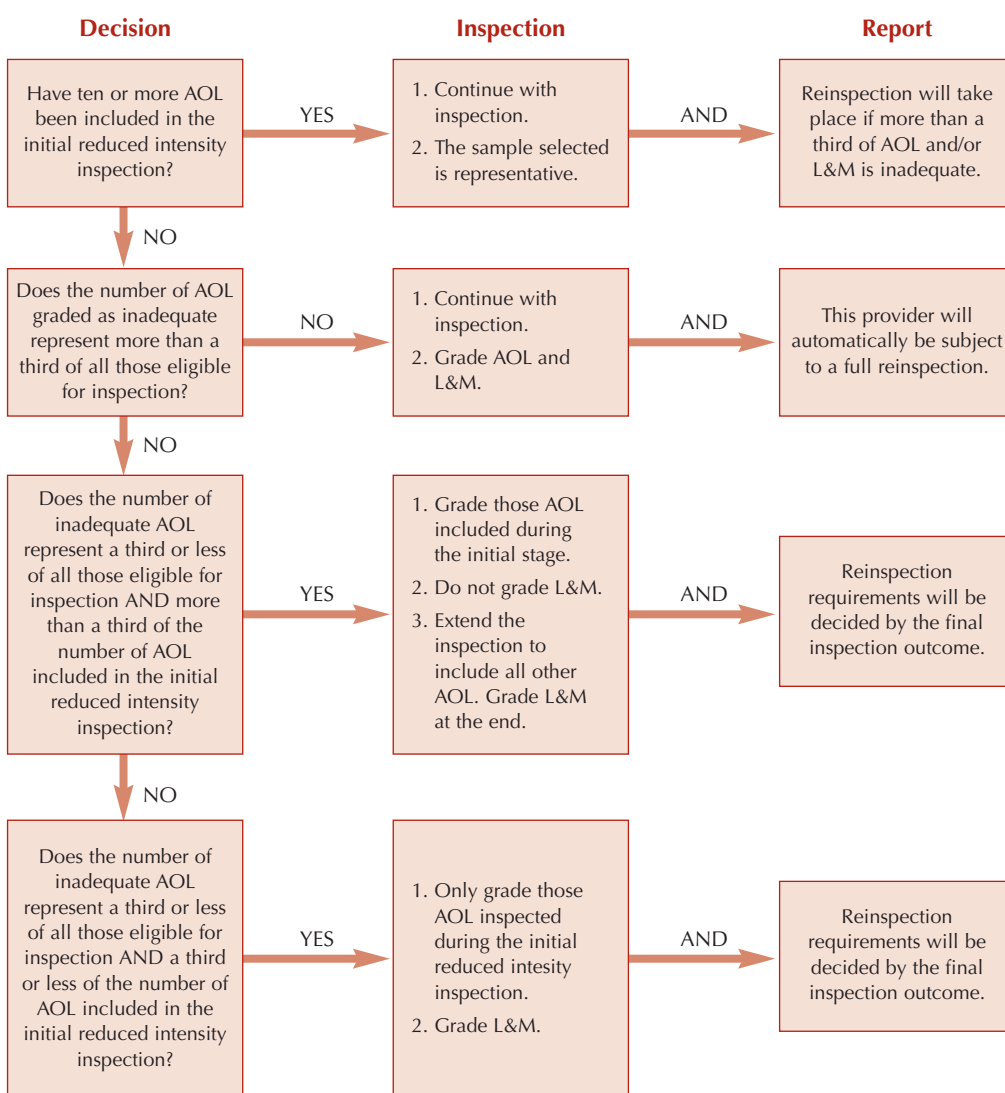
A **satisfactory** provider should have satisfactory or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two-thirds of the area of learning grades. A satisfactory provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than a third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

When making the overall effectiveness judgement on **reduced intensity inspections**, the above rules should be applied to the areas of learning that have been reported on and graded. Where, in the case of a reduced intensity inspection, the quality of some aspects of the provision is inadequate, the ALI reserves the right to allocate further days to the inspection to obtain a more comprehensive view of quality and standards. Where this is the case, leadership and management will not be graded and the overall effectiveness judgement will not be made until the fuller inspection has been completed.

The overall effectiveness grade will be moderated by an IM within two weeks of the end of the inspection. The final decision on the overall effectiveness judgement rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Extending inspections



Feedback of inspection findings

The feedback should reflect the structure of the inspection report. The provider must be left with a written record of the feedback, either in the form of a copy of any presentation slides or the lead inspector's feedback notes.

The feedback must give a balanced account of the strengths and weaknesses in each aspect of provision inspected. It should reflect the grades awarded. As far as possible, inspectors should try to leave the provider in a positive frame of mind.

- The lead inspector thanks the provider for the co-operation received in the course of planning and carrying out the inspection. The lead inspector explains that the feedback will be delivered in its entirety, followed by questions from the provider. The lead inspector can call on other members of the inspection team to give feedback on specific aspects of provision.
- The lead inspector explains the inspection process and outlines the evidence base for the inspection judgements.
- The lead inspector presents the learning session observation grades if there has been a sufficient number of observations for a table to appear in the report.
- The lead inspector presents the inspection grades and emphasises that, at this stage of the inspection process, they are provisional and subject to moderation by inspection managers and then by directors. The lead inspector explains that the moderation process is designed to ensure that the inspection grades are consistent and in line with those awarded for similar providers nationally.
- Inspectors present the strengths and weaknesses in each area of learning and in leadership and management.
- The strengths of each aspect of provision should be covered first, then the weaknesses.
- Where relevant, the word 'weakness' should be used rather than a euphemism such as 'issue' or 'area for improvement'. The provider should be left in no doubt about the nature of the weaknesses that have affected the grades.
- The lead inspector must have a clear understanding of each strength and weakness and be assured that there is sufficient inspection evidence to support them.
- The provider should be given a written record of the strength and weakness bullet points. The lead inspector explains that they may be revised during moderation and editing. It will generally not be sufficient to simply read out each strength and weakness bullet point. Some exemplification and reference to the evidence base will usually be necessary.
- After the leadership and management and area of learning judgements have been delivered, the lead inspector will give the team judgements about the rigour and accuracy of the self-assessment process and the provider's capacity to make further improvements. This will be followed by the overall effectiveness grade and descriptor.
- The lead inspector outlines the key challenges for the provider, reflecting the challenges that will appear in the inspection report.
- The lead inspector informs the provider that any specific examples of good practice identified by the team will be followed up by an ALI representative, usually by a telephone call, for potential inclusion in a database of good practice.

- At the end of the formal feedback, inspectors should be prepared to clarify points made and answer queries from the provider. The lead inspector may also draw attention to the views of learners as expressed to the inspection team.
- The provider's attention is drawn to the publication timescale. The lead inspector explains that a draft copy of the report will be sent shortly before publication to enable the provider to check that facts in the report are correct.
- The lead inspector explains how the provider can evaluate the inspection by using the form that accompanies the published inspection report. Note is taken of any concerns that the provider expresses about the inspection.
- The lead inspector refers to any requirements that relevant funding bodies have for preparing a post-inspection action plan.
- The lead inspector draws attention to the complaints procedure.
- The nominee may want further clarification of inspection judgements after the inspection team has left. The lead inspector should indicate a willingness to provide this by telephone in the week following inspection.

Report writing

An inspection report is the public record of an inspection. It must be factually accurate. The judgements presented must be consistent with the inspection evidence and reflect the collective view of the inspection team. The inspection report and, in particular, the detailed inspection findings, should contribute to bringing about improvement by giving the provider a sound basis for a post-inspection action plan or development plan and furnishing useful information to funding bodies.

Inspectors:

- produce a draft of the section(s) of the report for which they are responsible, in the format requested by the lead inspector and in line with the ALI's house style. They should bear in mind that less intensive inspections should lead to correspondingly shorter inspection report sections.
- ensure that an area of learning or contributory area of learning report clearly makes judgements on the five key questions of the *Common Inspection Framework*. This means making judgements on aspects that are satisfactory, as well as strengths and weaknesses.
- check that all data used is traceable to a verified source and that the numbers add up correctly.
- check that the interpretation of data in the text is consistent with any data in the tables.
- use the inspection notebook to record any examples of good practice and pass this form to the lead inspector.
- ensure that all reports include judgements about the quality of literacy, numeracy and language support. In addition, each leadership and management report should include judgements on how well this area of work is strategically led and operationally managed.
- ensure, where appropriate, that reports include judgements about the effectiveness of provision for children and vulnerable adults.

The lead inspector:

- works on draft sections of the report to produce coherent text that is ready for moderation and editing. This means eliminating inconsistencies in judgements, weeding out unnecessary repetition and producing clearly written, unambiguous text that is rich in judgement.
- produces a 'Key Findings' section for the inspection report that gives an overall picture of the provision and reflects the grades awarded and the strengths and weaknesses identified. An exemplar report outlines the prescribed elements of the inspection report.
- ensures that the report accurately reflects the judgements made by the inspection team and communicated to the provider at the feedback meeting.
- checks all the data in the report for consistency and accuracy, both in the tables and in the text.
- creates a report on the inspection report system.
- bears in mind that less intensive inspections should lead to correspondingly shorter inspection reports.

Writing style

- The inspection report should be written in language that can be understood by someone who is not familiar with the jargon of the adult learning sector.
- The detailed inspection findings can use some of the language more commonly used in the sector. The ALI's house style guide provides further details. Having said that, plain language is preferred and editors will comment unfavourably on excessive use of jargon.
- Bullet points should convey as much meaning as possible within about 12 words. Do not use main verbs as these make bullets less punchy. Start each bullet with an adjective or adjectival descriptor, e.g. good, poor, well-planned, etc.
- Description should be kept to an absolute minimum in the detailed inspection findings; inspectors should reserve description for setting judgements into context by means of short examples.
- Keep tenses consistent. Use the present tense, except where describing specific events in the past, such as observed learning sessions. Do not use future or conditional tenses as these can read as recommendation or speculation.
- A logical and consistent order is needed for paragraphs of a report. Inspectors should deal with strengths, satisfactory elements and weaknesses (in that order) within each section (achievement and standards, the quality of provision, leadership and management).

Inspection quality and improvement

The inspection quality and improvement system (IQI) is designed to bring together the quality assurance and related training activities in which inspectors are involved, and to provide a coherent system that will lead to continuous improvement of the inspection process.

Inspection reviews

Inspection reviews are an important aspect of the new IQI system. All inspectors will take part in the inspection review. These reviews will take place at the end of every inspection after grading, and before feedback, and will be no more than one hour long.

Inspection reviews will involve self-assessment of the inspection by full-time and associate inspectors, and will be concerned solely with assessing and reporting on the quality of the inspection in which they have just been involved.

The inspection review will usually be managed by the assistant lead (or lead full-time inspector) in conjunction with the lead inspector. The assistant lead will be responsible for producing a brief report on the team's findings.

The nominee will not be involved in the inspection review but will be invited to provide independent judgements about the inspection process through ALI inspection evaluation arrangements.

Each inspection review will identify the key strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of each inspection.

Aspects of practice which the team judges to be particularly successful will be described in sufficient detail to enable other inspection teams to adopt them.

The key aspects of inspection practice that the inspection review will cover are:

- planning and deployment of resources
- management of the inspection
- conduct of the inspection team
- gathering of evidence
- developing judgements and grading
- reporting

For each aspect the team will answer the question 'what worked well and why?' and 'what did not work well and why?' In addition to ensuring 100 per cent monitoring of the quality of inspections, inspection reviews will act as a focus for debate about inspection methodology; help to deepen inspectors' insights into what they are doing; and encourage the development and dissemination of ideas and sharing of what is best in inspection practice.

SECTION 3

Specific inspection activity

Inspection of subcontractors

One aim of the inspection programme is to reduce the number of separate inspection interventions for each provider, by covering all publicly funded work in a single inspection visit. This means that a provider inspection should include relevant work carried out under subcontractual arrangements as well as that which is part of a direct contract with a funding organisation.

The arrangements outlined below are intended to complement each other and achieve, wherever possible, a single inspection of an institution.

Work subcontracted to other providers

If the inspected provider subcontracts work to others, careful consideration should be given to how, and whether, the work of subcontractors should be included in the inspection. During the main contract holder's inspection, attention should focus on the ways in which the main contractor assures itself of the quality of its subcontractors' work. If a subcontractor also holds a direct contract with a funding organisation and will be inspected in its own right, every effort should be made to minimise the impact of any other inspection on its work.

- Where a subcontractor provides the whole of the learning programme for a group or groups of learners and also holds a direct contract with a funding organisation, its work should be excluded from the main provider's inspection and included in the subcontractor's own inspection.
- Where a subcontractor provides some elements of a learning programme such as assessment and verification, and also has a direct contract with a funding organisation, these elements are in the scope of the provider's inspection. The inspection team should not directly observe learning provided by such subcontractors, but may arrange interviews with staff or learners involved. Such interventions should be kept to a minimum, particularly if the subcontractor has recently been inspected in its own right. Data relating to the retention and achievement of learners and evidence drawn from recent inspections of the subcontractor should be considered.
- Where a subcontractor does not have a direct contract with a funding organisation and is not due to be inspected in its own right under the arrangements for the inspection of consortium members, the learning it provides should be fully incorporated in the inspection.

Work carried under subcontract to another provider

The arrangements set out above will be mirrored where the provider being inspected delivers work under a subcontractual arrangement. All work delivered under subcontractual arrangements will be included in the inspection.

Naming of subcontractors in inspection reports

For the purposes of transparency and accountability, significant subcontracting arrangements should be clearly set out in inspection reports.

- Where one provider subcontracts work to another, the names of the subcontractors should be included in the provider's inspection report.
- Where one provider (the subcontractor) delivers work under subcontract on behalf of another, the name of the contract holder should be included in the subcontractor's inspection report.

Reinspections

Most of the procedures in this handbook apply equally to reinspections. The following procedures apply specifically to reinspections.

- Reinspections are carried out in accordance with the revised *Common Inspection Framework*.
- Any area of learning graded 4 will be reinspected.
- A full reinspection of the entire provision is normally carried out if more than one-third of the areas of learning inspected are graded 4.
- A full reinspection of the entire provision is carried out if leadership and management are graded 4.
- Provision which is new, and was not present at the original inspection, will not be in scope for reinspection.
- Reinspections are carried out over a period of time through a number of interim reinspection visits and a final reinspection visit. Depending on the provider, there should be a minimum of two and a maximum of four visits, appropriately spaced throughout the reinspection period. This gives the provider sufficient time in which to act upon the emerging judgements of the inspection team. In most cases, the reinspection process is completed within one year of the original inspection. In no case does the process last for more than two years.
- During the transition from cycle 1 to cycle 2, all reinspections will follow the format of the first inspection in terms of the area of learning, contributory area(s) and grade scale being used.

Scheduling

- The pre-inspection analysis will determine the number of inspector days allocated to each reinspection. The allocation can be modified, by IM agreement, if the lead inspector subsequently discovers circumstances which were not known to the panel. Any changes agreed will be communicated to IPDT via an amended IRF.
- Each reinspection is allocated to a lead inspector soon after the first inspection report is published.
- The lead inspector for the reinspection will normally be different from the lead on the first inspection. Where possible the lead's own area of learning will be taken into account when allocating reinspections.

Planning

- The lead inspector has discretion over how the days are allocated during the reinspection period.
- Before the reinspection planning meeting with the provider, the lead inspector will obtain a copy of the provider's previous inspection reports and post-inspection action plan.

- The lead inspector should obtain, from the regional link inspector, any relevant information about the provider.
- The lead inspector ensures that a representative(s) of the relevant funding body(ies) is invited to the planning meeting.
- At the planning meeting, a reinspection plan is drawn up. The plan reflects the nature of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the original inspection, the post-inspection action plan, and the likely speed of the provider's response to the findings of the original inspection.
- After the planning meeting, the lead inspector writes to the provider to confirm the reinspection plan. The letter is copied to the relevant funding body(ies).
- In the case of a **partial reinspection**, where leadership and management is at least satisfactory, and less than one-third of areas of learning are inadequate, only the areas which were graded as inadequate at the first inspection will be reinspected.
- In the case of a **full reinspection**, all areas of learning will be covered, including any that were present at, but not covered by, the original inspection. Inspection resources will be focused on those areas graded 4 in the original inspection and on areas not previously inspected. Inspection resources for areas graded 3 or better should be sufficient to provide a reassurance that achievements are being maintained, that the post-inspection action plan included sound measures to remedy weaknesses and build on strengths, and that these measures are in train.
- Areas of learning taken on by the provider since the original inspection should not form part of the reinspection.
- If the lead inspector intends to investigate of an area of learning in detail during a monitoring visit, the number of inspection days devoted to this area of learning in the final week of the reinspection may be reduced accordingly. Evidence gathered during monitoring visits will almost certainly be relevant during the final visit.

Before reinspection visits

- Before each visit, except for the final one, the lead inspector asks the provider for updated information on learner numbers and trends in achievement.
- The lead inspector contacts the provider to confirm visit arrangements. The provider should be clear about the focus for the visit and whether other inspectors will attend. The lead inspector ensures that a representative(s) of the relevant funding body(ies) is invited to the spoken feedback at the end of each visit.
- The Quality Assurance, Data and Research (QADR) team will request final achievement data from the provider approximately six weeks before the final reinspection visit. This will be provided to the lead inspector.

During reinspection visits

- All inspection evidence should be recorded on standard evidence forms and kept as part of the evidence base for the whole reinspection.
- The lead inspector will provide verbal and written feedback to the provider and the funding body/ies after each visit. The reinspection progress record should form the basis of the written feedback.
- During the reinspection process, the lead inspector should decide whether the quality of provision is being maintained in aspects graded 3 or better at the previous inspection. If the lead inspector has severe misgivings and feels that more detailed investigation is warranted during the final week of the reinspection, then

they must discuss this with, and obtain approval from, an IM. If it only comes to light during the final visit of the reinspection that the quality of an aspect of provision originally graded 3 or better has substantially deteriorated, it may be necessary to extend the reinspection to allow a more detailed assessment of the area concerned. Approval for this must be obtained from an IM.

- At the end of the final visit of the reinspection, the inspection team confirms the strengths and weaknesses of all reinspected aspects of provision, and awards grades. Grades are awarded only to those aspects of provision reinspected in detail.
- It is important to note that although judgements may be made about leadership and management (including the aspects of equality of opportunity and quality assurance) or any area of learning at interim reinspection visits the grades will not be confirmed until the end of the final reinspection visit.

Reporting arrangements

- After the final visit of the reinspection, a report is prepared and published. Aspects of provision inspected in detail (areas of learning and/or leadership and management) will be reported in separate sections in the inspection report. Areas of learning graded 3 or better at the previous inspection that have not been looked at in detail will be covered in the 'Overall Judgement' section of the report. Comment will be restricted to a statement that quality and standards have been maintained in the area concerned.

National inspections

All national inspections are different, depending on the structure of the provider, the number of learners and their geographical spread. The two most usual models for deployment of the inspection team are regional clusters of inspectors, managed by a core team of full-time inspectors, or individual inspectors working in different areas of the country.

The lead inspector should be aware of the following factors:

- National inspections are allocated centrally by IPDT. The usual pre-inspection analysis will give the lead inspector basic information and suggest a resource allocation. Early contact with the provider is recommended, to establish regional structures, staffing and further details.
- Most national providers contract with the LSC's National Employers Service. If a provider has multiple contracts with funding organisations, establish which will be the lead body. Ask the provider to invite appropriate representative(s) to the planning and final feedback meetings.
- If the provider has learners in Wales, invite Estyn, the Welsh inspectorate, to join the inspection. A single report is produced, jointly badged by the ALI and Estyn.
- More than one planning meeting is likely to be needed. A second planning meeting allows time to review the appropriateness of the IRF and amend the inspection schedule if needed.
- The IRF should be submitted as soon as possible. The LSC's report on learner numbers, which forms part of the pre-inspection analysis, is helpful in planning as it shows learners' postcodes. Some areas of learning may not need inspectors for the full duration of the inspection. If this is the case, ensure that they join the

inspection for the final week and make this clear on the IRF. Include in the schedule the locations for different team members so that IPDT can give exact details to associate inspectors.

- Manage the sampling process closely and ensure that diversity (ethnicity, gender and disability) is considered as a factor. Sampling of every region is not necessary as long as a good cross-section of types of learning venue, teachers, learners and employers is achieved. An amendable spreadsheet is useful for keeping track of sampling information.
- Inspectors must see a mix of provision, including any subcontracted provision. Inspectors should not see learners from only one employer.
- Sort out as much data as possible before the inspection. Ensure that inspectors have the data before the inspection starts. Agree a cut-off date with the provider after which data will not be updated. Allocate a full-time inspector to manage data on the inspection. If LSC representatives are visiting the provider at the same time as the ALI to judge value for money and management of data, ensure that a leadership and management inspector meets them to share findings.
- Give IPDT very specific instructions on hotel arrangements. Hotels must be convenient for the location that inspectors are visiting. The hotel must be able to allow inspectors access to the chosen communication method, whether this is fax or e-mail.
- The inspection should only have one nominee. The provider may identify representatives from regions to be involved in planning and organising the inspection. This can provide an effective communication link.
- The provider may be interested in any differences between local and regional centres. Regional strengths and weaknesses can be fed back to the nominee during the inspection. Where appropriate, a section covering local and regional variations can be added to the inspection report.

Quality monitoring inspection visits

The procedures and guidance below complement the ALI's Quality Monitoring Inspection Protocol.

The following procedures and guidance apply specifically to quality monitoring inspection visits:

- The visit will determine the progress made since the previous inspection/reinspection. It is not a reinspection.
- The purpose is to test whether standards identified at a previous inspection/reinspection have improved, been maintained or deteriorated.
- The primary focus is on measuring how effective the provider's implementation of its post-inspection development plan/emergency action plan and any subsequent self-assessment have been in raising achievement and standards and supporting all learners.
- The visit will not result in any changes to existing inspection/reinspection reports or regrading of any aspects of the provision.
- The visit will normally be carried out by two full-time inspectors. The visit will normally last one day, except in the case of very large or national providers, which may be allocated two days.

Before the inspection visit

Inspectors are allocated a number of visits as part of their quarterly schedule of inspections. Once the quarterly allocation is known, the lead inspector:

- contacts the designated assisting inspector to agree a visit date.
- prepares a set of themes for the visit, using inspection/reinspection reports on the provider, the post-inspection development plan/emergency action plan, and the most recent self-assessment report as source material. IPDT asks providers for their current development plan and self-assessment report six weeks before the start of the quarter in which a visit is scheduled.
- establishes who will act as the provider's representative for the visit and arranges a time and date for a planning telephone call.
- makes the planning telephone call. During the call, the lead inspector should:
 - outline the reasons for, and scope of, the visit;
 - specify any documents they want to examine;
 - agree the themes to be explored and an outline timetable for the day; and
 - ask for updated retention and achievement data.
- completes an IRF for the visit and sends it to IPDT.
- informs the assisting lead of the agreed themes for the inspection and passes on copies of all relevant paperwork.

During the inspection visit

The inspectors:

- do not observe any learning sessions. Where the quality of teaching and learning is identified as a theme for the visit, inspectors should focus on evidence of measures to improve teaching and learning.
- use INSForm13 to make contemporaneous notes of the visit.
- inform an IM or director of inspection if the overall judgement is that standards have deteriorated.
- give spoken feedback to the provider at the end of the visit. This must include the overall judgement on whether the quality of provision has improved, remained at the same level or deteriorated following implementation of the post-inspection development plan/emergency action plan. No feedback is given to the local LSC.

After the inspection visit

The lead inspector:

- prepares a short report, using a Word template (INSForm14) and sends it to **moderation@ali.gov.uk** by the Monday of the week following the visit.

The report is moderated by an inspection manager, edited and processed by RPD and sent to the provider/funding organisation, within three weeks of the visit. It is not published.

SECTION 4

Guidance that applies to all inspection activity

Equality and diversity

The *Common Inspection Framework* requires inspectors to 'carry out their work with integrity, treating all those that they meet with courtesy and sensitivity'. Concern for individual learners requires that consideration of equality and diversity be at the heart of the ALI's inspection practice. Inspectors are expected to uphold the highest personal standards.

All inspectors are responsible for inspecting aspects of equality of opportunity. They should be conversant with the guidelines for this part of their work. It is particularly important that those inspecting areas of learning recognise the extent of their responsibility. Equality of opportunity is about what learners experience. It cannot be adequately inspected from the base room.

Inspectors need to be aware of certain considerations that need to be taken into account when dealing with different communities and types of learner. Examples of this could include:

- disability etiquette
- cultural issues.

Lead inspectors are responsible for identifying such considerations at the planning stage of their inspections. Inspection team members should be made aware of any relevant issues through the pre-inspection report. Lead inspectors should provide any background information that will help team members prepare for an inspection. They should ask providers if any staff or learners who have been selected for interview require any specific consideration.

When completing IRFs, inspectors should take into account what is known about the demographic profile of the learner group. Where appropriate, lead inspectors should indicate if it is desirable to include, in the team, inspectors from specific groups, to reflect the learner profile. It may not always be possible to fulfil these requests. There is no stipulation that a particular proportion of inspectors should come from specific groups.

The ALI aims to go far beyond compliance with legislation in this area of its work. Nevertheless, we have a clear duty to ensure that the provisions of relevant legislation and codes of practice are followed. Inspectors should be familiar with basic provisions of the relevant legislation, in particular that relating to race relations and disability discrimination, and take them into account in all inspections. When inspecting public authorities, the inspection report should evaluate the providers' responses to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. A comparable responsibility for reporting on public authorities' responses to the Disability Discrimination Act is expected in 2006.

Protection of children and vulnerable adults

Inspections often cover services and providers where there are children, young people aged under 18 or vulnerable adults. There is clear legislation and guidance relating to protecting these groups from abuse. Inspectors may, very occasionally, witness an incident, or find evidence that gives cause for concern. As responsible professionals, inspectors must ensure that appropriate action has been taken and, if not, pass on their concern to the appropriate authority.

Evidence of abuse could be:

- physical evidence such as bruising or other injury;
- information from a child or vulnerable adult, who talks about what has happened to them;
- direct observations of abusive or neglectful behaviour by adults; and
- direct referrals by parents, carers, members of the public or comments to inspectors.

It is essential that inspectors pass on information or report an incident that gives cause for concern. The following protocols should be followed:

- If the concern is raised as a result of a confidential disclosure, the inspector must be clear that they cannot keep this information to themselves. The inspector should explain that the information will have to be shared with someone who can help.
- Inspectors should not attempt to interview either the vulnerable person or the alleged perpetrator about the incident.
- Pass on to any concerns to the lead inspector.
- The lead inspector should contact the child protection co-ordinator in a school or college, the responsible person within a training provider or the head of service for vulnerable adults. If, in extreme cases, there is risk of immediate danger to the person, the police should be contacted.
- If the lead inspector is unable to contact the relevant person, or the concern involves senior management in the provider, they should inform their IM and then contact the local Social Services for Children and Young People, the local Safeguarding Children Board or the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection).

Reporting requirements under the Children Act 2004

The Children Act 2004 defines the new requirements for the inspection of children and young peoples' services. The main inspections of this work will be led by Ofsted and conducted by a range of agencies and inspectorates, including the ALI, through Joint Area Reviews of local authorities.

Where the provision being inspected includes young people up to the age of 19, or those of any age who are vulnerable through the residential nature of their provision, or because they are physically, mentally or socially disadvantaged, inspectors should evaluate the quality of the support they are afforded. Judgements on this support and, for example, the quality and appropriateness of the accommodation they have should be included in the report. These judgements and comments will then be used by the Joint Area Review teams in their inspections.

In order to collect information and judgements about the effectiveness of these services in provider inspections we need to be aware of the five outcomes identified in the Act. These are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a productive contribution
- Social and economic well-being

Summary judgements should be recorded on the form provided for this purpose.

Health and safety

The lead inspector carries out a health and safety risk assessment for each inspection and communicates the findings to the inspection team.

Throughout the inspection, inspectors should check the health and safety practices on all premises that learning and training take place. Inspectors are not health and safety experts but they have a responsibility to alert the provider to any significant risks they encounter during an inspection and report this to the head of QADR when appropriate.

Inspectors ensure that their own working practices throughout the inspection are in accordance with health and safety regulations.

An inspector who encounters evidence of an actual or potential health and safety problem should promptly draw it to the attention of the lead inspector, who should take it up with the provider.

Risk assessment

The ALI is legally obliged to carry out risk assessments of inspection-related activities. All lead inspectors must identify and assess significant risks that are 'reasonably foreseeable' in their areas of remit. All lead inspectors are trained to carry out risk assessments.

Risk assessment forms for inspection-related activities

Inspection-related activity covers all activities related to sole remit, joint remit (led by the ALI), commissioned inspections and reinspections. The risk assessment process starts with the planning meeting and should continue until the inspection has been completed. Risk assessments are not normally required for quality monitoring inspection visits.

Forms have been produced to assist in assessments. These identify most of the hazards that may occur. Not all the risks will be applicable and the list of risks is not exhaustive. You may need to modify or add hazards that are relevant to the inspection activity you are carrying out. Blank lines have been incorporated for this purpose.

Lead inspectors should provide a current risk assessment to each member of the inspection team in the team briefing and supporting papers. The risk assessment

should be updated to reflect changed circumstances or information. Amendments to the risk assessment should be discussed at inspection team meetings. At the planning meeting, the lead inspector must ensure that the provider is aware of its responsibility to give inspectors a health and safety briefing and that those employers to be visited also provide a health and safety briefing.

Completion of the form

The form is split into the following components:

- **Activity:** The operation or task that provides the context for the assessment.
- **Hazard description:** The thing that has the potential to cause harm. This will need a clear explanation.
- **Ratings:** See below for how these should be scored.
- **Hazard:** How serious an injury is likely as a result of the hazard. Express this as a numeric value.
- **Likelihood:** How likely it is that the harm will result from the hazard. This will also be expressed as a numeric value.
- **Risk:** The product of the hazard and the likelihood for any specific task or activity. Expressed as a numeric value. The higher the value, the more significant the risk.

Each of the ratings above needs to be scored according to the broad criteria below:

Hazard

Hazard consequences	Criteria	Rating
High	Serious injury or worse	3
Medium	Moderate injury	2
Low	Minor injury	1

Likelihood

Hazard consequences	Criteria	Rating
High	Likely to occur	3
Medium	Neither likely nor unlikely to occur	2
Low	Unlikely to occur	1

Recommended control measures

A risk assessment allows lead inspectors to estimate whether a risk is controlled to an acceptable level (based on the data relating to the risk). If a risk is not acceptable, additional control measures must be taken and the risk must be reassessed.

Dealing with the risk

The table below indicates the action requirements for lead inspectors:

Risk rating	Action required
1 or 2	Maintain control measures
3 or 4	Review control measures, take action if required
6 or 9	Improve controls immediately and consider stopping work and informing an inspection manager and Head of QADR

Documentation

All risk assessments should be signed by the lead inspector. Inspection assessment forms should be kept 'live' until the inspection is completed. The forms should then be returned to IPDT.

Recording and storing evidence

Recording of evidence

At the planning meeting it is important that the nominee is informed that all observation grades and judgements are confidential and will not be disclosed to the provider in such a way that individuals can be identified, and that the content of any observation or interview or meeting will not be attributed to any individual.

Inspectors should remind provider's staff, learners and others of the confidentiality they can expect before each new interview or observation.

Evidence files will vary in size, complexity and comprehensiveness. Evidence files need to be fit-for-purpose and proportionate to each inspection.

During the inspection

- All evidence in the files must be legible (no tippex).
- Forms need to be completed in full, with boxes completed or struck out if not applicable.
- The name of the inspector and the inspection name and unique reference number must be entered on every sheet.
- Observation of learning forms must include the name of the teacher/trainer; class/course name; number of learners; time/duration of observation; location (if applicable); and any other 'identifying' information.
- Interview records must provide the name of the interviewee and identify the role he or she plays.
- Observation and interview forms must be contemporaneous (not rewritten later).

- Each inspector's evidence should be kept together.
- Feedback meeting notes and early text drafts should be kept.
- Copies of data sheets, and any other evidence provided by the nominee, that have supported judgements should be included.
- Copies of other materials, such as training plans, lesson plans, handouts, etc., can be included on the same basis as above, but the provider should be informed that you require these. Only include them if they illustrate a judgement.
- Any telephone/video interview sheets should specify that the interviews were conducted in this way.

After the inspection

- Provide a detailed index of the contents of the evidence, including a file list of the types and number of different documents.
- Tell the nominee what is in the file and copy them the index, but do not disclose the content of evidence/observation/interview notes. These remain confidential between the individuals and the inspectorate.
- Avoid retaining anything that is not strictly pertinent to the final text/judgements.

Conduct and approach

Inspectors should act professionally at all times. They should be courteous and clear in their communications. They must make fair judgements based on firm evidence. They must adhere to the policies and procedures of the ALI.

Providers should treat all those involved in the inspection with respect and courtesy. They should promptly raise any concerns about the inspection process, differences of opinion about inspectors' judgements, or complaints about the conduct of an inspector, to enable the lead inspector to resolve matters during the inspection with the minimum of disruption.

Many **associate inspectors** act as consultants to training providers as well as carrying out inspection work for the ALI. The ALI recognises that much of this consultancy work is of significant benefit to providers and learners. However, associate inspectors must be fully aware of the ways in which consultancy work with a provider can create a conflict of interest. With this in mind, associate inspectors should not:

- discuss consultancy work in the presence of provider's staff while working as part of an ALI inspection team.
- engage in on-site support for providers during the course of an inspection or reinspection visit.

Conflicts of interest

Inspectors must have no covert or prior connection with a provider that might undermine their objectivity while inspecting that provider. Contracts of service for lead inspectors and associate inspectors give guidance on outside interests. These must be followed.

During an inspection, inspectors must make it clear that they are independent and objective by:

- not accepting gifts from a provider.
- offering to pay for any refreshments provided during inspection.
- not accepting hospitality except at a modest level.

Actions to avoid a conflict of interest before and during inspection

All inspectors must:

- on appointment, declare all possible conflicts of interest so that these can be noted by the ALI.
- decline to take part in any inspection which involves an obvious conflict of interest. No inspector should inspect a provider that has employed them in any capacity during the previous five years.
- when asked to join an inspection team, check that they do not have any connection with the provider that could present a conflict of interest. It may not be immediately obvious from the name of the provider. If in doubt, ask the lead inspector for more details.
- notify the lead inspector immediately if they become aware of a conflict of interest during an inspection.

Lead inspectors must:

- at the planning meeting, supply enough information to the provider about the inspection team to enable the provider to check that no member of the team has a potential conflict of interest.
- request a replacement inspector if notified of a conflict of interest before the inspection.
- check that no one added to the team, including trainee inspectors and observers, has a potential conflict of interest.
- consult the nominee immediately if alerted to a potential conflict of interest during inspection. If it appears that a genuine conflict has arisen, contact an inspection manager for guidance.

Confidentiality

Inspectors must respect the confidentiality of the information they are given throughout the inspection. They are responsible at all times for the security of information supplied by the provider.

All inspection findings are confidential to the inspectorate, the provider and the funding bodies until the inspection report is published. Inspection findings may be shared with a third party in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances might include the need to seek clarification from awarding bodies or the QCA; suspicion of fraud or malpractice; or concerns about the protection of children or vulnerable adults. Should such grounds arise, the lead inspector consults an IM.

Providers are expected to observe the same conventions of confidentiality as inspection team members.

Suspicious about fraud or malpractice

Inspectors should alert the lead inspector to any suspicions about deliberate fraud, improper use of public funds or other malpractice. The lead inspector should, in the first instance, raise such suspicions with an IM.

Role of observers

The role of every person present at an inspection should be made clear to the nominee. Observers must not take any part in the inspection, either by collecting evidence, giving comments or making judgements.

Complaints

- The lead inspector should attempt to resolve any complaints or disputes as they arise during the inspection process.
- Lead inspectors must keep their inspection manager informed of any unresolved problems in case they lead to a complaint.
- If a provider is not satisfied that its complaint has been dealt with adequately by the lead inspector, it may use the ALI's complaints procedure, *Making a Complaint*. A copy of this is sent out to providers at notification stage. The procedure is also available on the ALI's website.

Glossary of abbreviations

ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
Ofsted	Office for Standards and Education (England)
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
IPDT	Inspection Planning and Deployment Team
IM	Inspection Manager
RPD	Reports Production Department
QADR	Quality Assurance, Data and Research
IRF	Inspection Requirement Form
IQI	Inspection Quality and Improvement
PIA	Pre-inspection Analysis



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