



Understanding inspections in the post-16 sector: a guide for learners



Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998. The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- / nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities;
- / primary schools;
- / secondary schools;
- / special schools;
- / pupil referral units;
- / independent schools;
- / further education;
- / adult community learning;
- / youth support services;
- / youth and community work training;
- / local authority education services for children and young people;
- / teacher education and training;
- / work-based learning;
- / careers companies; and
- / offender learning.

Estyn also provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Our inspection work and advice play a key part in raising standards and quality and informing policy in education and training across Wales.

Head Office:

Anchor Court,
Keen Road,
Cardiff CF24 5JW
Tel: 029 2044 6446
Fax: 029 2044 6448

www.estyn.gov.uk

How will an inspection benefit me?

Inspection tells you about the standards and quality at your education and training provider. It tells you what the provider does well and not so well. It gives the provider an expert view on its work and helps it to improve the quality of what it does and raise standards.

Who inspects the provider?

Inspectors are people who have substantial experience of teaching or training and of management in education. The inspection team is led by a reporting inspector who is one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

Each inspection team will include peer inspectors. Peer inspectors are teachers or leaders currently working in another education and training provider.

Each provider is given the option of having one of their own staff on the inspection team. This person is called the 'nominee' and he or she keeps the inspectors well informed about the provider and its work. Providers do not have to take up this option, but they usually do.

Inspectors will have identity passes, and will have gained enhanced clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau.

Inspectors will also register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority in accordance with the regulations. In conducting the inspection, inspectors will adhere to Estyn's code of conduct.

You can find out more about inspections by visiting the Estyn website at www.estyn.gov.uk.

How will the provider be inspected?

All providers in Wales are inspected in broadly the same way. Inspectors use a common inspection framework that tells them how to carry out inspections and how to make judgements.

The reporting inspector reports on the following:

- / the standards achieved by learners and their wellbeing;
- / the quality of provision, learners' learning experiences, the quality of teaching/training, and the quality of care, support and guidance; and
- / the quality of leadership and management.

Each provider is required to monitor and evaluate their own work to assess what they are doing well and to identify how they can improve. The provider uses this information to write a self-assessment report.

Inspections start with the provider's evaluation of its own work. Inspectors use this report to plan the inspection.

We normally give providers about four working weeks' notice of their inspection.

How do inspectors take account of my views of the provider?

Estyn wants to know what your views of the provider are.

We will set up an online questionnaire for the inspection of your education or training provider. It will help the inspection team if you answer the questions to show what you think the provider is doing well, as well as to show what you think the provider could do better. The inspection team will analyse the responses and use this information to find out more when they visit the provider during the inspection.

There will also be paper copies of the questionnaire available for you to complete.

Your answers to the online and paper questionnaires, whichever you complete, will only be seen by the inspectors. They are confidential to you and the inspectors and will not be seen by the provider so you are safe to indicate what you think and feel.

Inspectors will also use many opportunities to talk to learners during the inspection, especially in sessions and workshops where these opportunities arise. They will ask questions about how learners feel about their course and about the provider as a whole. Inspectors will talk to learners about the work they are doing and how well they are getting on. Inspectors may also arrange some specific meetings with learners. If you feel you need to talk to inspectors then the reporting inspector will try to arrange this for you. This may not always be possible, but we will do our best to arrange this.

Listening to learners is a very important part of the inspection process.

How will I know the inspectors' views?

The inspection report will cover the areas listed earlier and includes a brief commentary on the analysis of learners' views as expressed through the questionnaires. No learners will be named in the report.

In most cases, we hope to have the inspection report on our website within about eight weeks.

We encourage you to read the report. You can find it on Estyn's website www.estyn.gov.uk.

What happens next?

Following the inspection all providers must produce a plan for improvement in the future.

Providers that are doing well will have recognition of their good or excellent performance in their inspection report. Any sector-leading practice will be written up as a case study and can be shared with other providers.

During all inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the provider is underperforming and needs follow-up activity.

In most cases where a provider needs follow-up activity, this will consist of a brief inspection visit by an Estyn inspector. This visit will focus on the recommendations in the original report.

While most providers perform well, there are a few providers where learners are not doing as well as they should be. Where inspectors consider that the current performance of the provider is not good enough, or where they consider the prospects for improvement are weak, then a small team of inspectors will visit the provider again to see whether they are improving along the right lines. Estyn inspectors will continue to visit these providers until they are satisfied that they are providing a better education for learners.

What do I do if I have concerns about the inspection?

Complaints about an inspection are rare. We treat all complaints very seriously. If you have a concern about the inspection of your provider, you should telephone 02920 446446 or email feedback@estyn.gov.uk or write to:

Feedback and Complaints Manager

Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW