Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

# Nominee handbook

# For Work-based Learning Apprenticeship providers

# for inspections from September 2022

**This guidance is also available in Welsh.**

**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
- all-age schools
- special schools
- pupil referral units
- independent schools
- further education
- independent specialist colleges
- adult learning in the community
- local authority education services for children and young people
- teacher education and training
- Welsh for adults
- work-based learning
- learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- reports to Senedd Cymru and provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the Welsh Government and others
- makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

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## Contents | Page

## Introduction

This handbook is for nominees who will be the provider representative on the inspection team during their provider's 's inspection. It aims to provide guidance for CEOs / principals and senior leaders that will enable them to understand and carry out the role of nominee effectively.

The handbook is in three parts.

- Part 1: Before the inspection
- Part 2: During inspection
- Part 3: After the inspection

It will be helpful for you to have a copy of the Estyn 2022 'What We Inspect (apprenticeship providers)' and 'How We Inspect' documents to refer to as you go through the nominee handbook. These documents are available on our website. It is very important that you are familiar with them before the inspection.

**In order to act as a nominee on an inspection, you must have read the nominee handbook and completed the declaration in the initial contact form (ICF) in the virtual inspection room (VIR).**

The inspection co-ordinator (IC) will check to see that the declaration has been completed before the start of the inspection.

## Part 1: Role and responsibilities

This section will explain your role and responsibilities as the provider nominee.

This section should enable you to:

- have a good understanding of the role
- understand the protocol that guides your work as the nominee
- know the nominee's responsibilities prior to the inspection

### Background

By inviting providers to choose a nominee for the inspection to work closely alongside the inspection team, we aim to involve provider actively in the inspection process. The presence of a nominee helps to strengthen the partnership between the inspection team and the provider. It will also give providers a better insight into the inspection process and provide valuable opportunities for professional learning. However, it is not a requirement that the provider put forward a nominee.

We invite providers to select a nominee who will:

- ensure that inspectors are fully informed about the context of the provider's work
- has a clear understanding of the work of the provider and its partners
- contribute to meetings of the inspection team
- hear the emerging findings of the team

### The nominee

As nominee, you should be a sufficiently senior member of staff to act as a link between the provider and the inspection team. Inspectors value the role and contribution of the nominee highly, as the nominee contributes significantly to ensuring that the inspection runs smoothly. Normally, the nominee is a member of the senior management team who has a comprehensive understanding of the work of the provider.

If the provider decides not to take up the offer of having a nominee:

- this should not prejudice the inspection; the fact that a provider does not have a nominee will have no impact of the evaluations made by the inspection team

- the reporting inspector (RI) will still need to establish a climate in which the provider values the inspection. The RI should always work to maintain a good working relationship with the senior staff

### An effective nominee

The role of the nominee is demanding. It requires you to exercise the objectivity essential to an external inspection process. Your role is not that of an advocate or defender of the provider, but is intended to facilitate the inspection process, for example by ensuring that the team has access to the evidence and information it requires to come to a valid and reliable evaluation of the provider's work. **You will also be required to respect the strict confidentiality of all inspection discussions.**

**Before the inspection** you should:

- become familiar with the two documents 'What We Inspect' and 'How We Inspect'
- become familiar with Estyn's guidance on the role of the nominee
- make appropriate administrative arrangements for the inspection
- ensure that the evidence required for the inspection is available for the inspection team

As a senior leader in the provider, you should play a substantial role in the provider's self-evaluation and improvement processes and have a good working knowledge of the provider's strengths and improvement priorities. The inspection team will not expect you to know the answer to every single question about the provider instantly, but they will expect you to know who or where to go to get the relevant evidence.

## Gathering evidence

Almost all of your contact before the inspection will be with the inspection co-ordinator (IC). The IC will contact the provider by telephone 15 working days before the inspection to give notice of the date of the inspection. During this telephone call, the IC will give the provider details of the inspection team and discuss the arrangements for the inspection.

Following this, Estyn will contact the provider by email to arrange a Teams meeting to discuss the arrangements for the inspection. ICs in Estyn will undertake the initial contact with providers. During this discussion, the IC will:

- explain the purpose of the inspection
- send a copy of the initial contact form (ICF)
- confirm the date and time for a meeting with the provider and RI; this will include CEO/principal, nominee and key leaders
- discuss the specific information required before the inspection, including the completion by the provider of a self-evaluation form on its provision for safeguarding, and make the arrangements for receiving it in electronic form through the Virtual Inspection Room
- ask if there are any issues or risks the team should be aware of and ask for a general health and safety briefing for the team at the start of the inspection
- confirm the name and agree the role of the nominee and explain the process for completing the nominee guidance
- confirm a meeting at the start of the inspection with the nominee to provide a health and safety briefing for the team
- confirm arrangements for a short presentation at the start at the inspection for the provider to set out its priorities for improvement and its current stage of development
- provide links and guidance for the completion of online pre-inspection questionnaires for learners, staff, employers and governors (where appropriate)
- ensure that there are agreed procedures for addressing any concerns or

complaints that might arise during the course of the inspection
- organise any domestic arrangements, such as a base for the inspectors, parking and internet access
- confirm the arrangements for feeding back the inspection findings
- agree the arrangements for completing the post-inspection questionnaire
- inform the provider through the initial contact form of the key inspection arrangements

The IC will request the following information from the provider through the virtual inspection room as soon as possible after the formal notification of the inspection:

- completed partner/learner number information form
- completed provider and learner information template
- the provider's most recent quality development plan
- the provider's most recent self-assessment report
- suggest to the provider that the most effective way to enter documents into the VIR to set-up folders for each inspection area (IA) and place the documents most relevant for the IA into these folders and upload; generic documents can be uploaded individually.
- Initial Contact Form (ICF)
- organisation structure
- learner numbers, levels, learning area and subcontractor template

This information should be uploaded to the VIR no later than five working days after notification. The IC will explain to you how the VIR system works.

The RI will contact the CEO/principal by telephone shortly after the college has been notified of its inspection. The RI will discuss with the CEO/principal any other evidence that the RI requests to be entered into the VIR or to be available for the team when they arrive. This will include:

- RI to share arrangements for the three day visit, including subcontractors/ partners who will be visited
- a folder for each IA containing the most appropriate information to meet the inspection framework
- learner visit timetable for 10 inspectors to learners on and off-the-job

## Expectations of providers

In order that inspection and regulation are constructive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on mutual courtesy, respect and professional behaviour. We expect inspectors to uphold Estyn's Code of Conduct but we also expect providers to:

- be courteous and professional
- provide evidence that enables enable inspectors to conduct the inspection in an open, honest and objective way
- use Estyn's electronic systems for managing inspections as required
- provide evidence that will enable inspectors to report honestly, fairly and reliably about the provider

- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the reporting inspector and other inspectors
- recognise that inspectors need to observe practice and talk to staff, learners and other stakeholders without the presence of a manager or senior leader
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of the reporting inspector in a timely and suitable manner through the nominee or senior manager
- work with inspectors to minimise disruption and stress throughout the inspection
- ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
- maintain the confidentiality and meetings and inspection findings until the final publication of the report

At the point of the inspection notification, providers should review the composition of the inspection team. It is the responsibility of the providers to highlight any perceived or actual conflicts of interest prior to the start of their inspection.

# Part 2: During the inspection

## Section A: Roles and responsibilities

**During** the inspection you should:

- liaise with the RI about planning and administrative arrangements
- respond to team requests for additional information
- assist in resolving any problems that arise
- contribute to discussions in team meetings regarding the provider's strengths and areas for improvement

Your role is not to act as an advocate for the provider, but you may, where appropriate, suggest further evidence for inspectors to consider that may be relevant to the inspection.

As nominee, you should provide a line of communication between the provider and the inspection team. If staff have any concerns, for example about the conduct of the inspection, they should raise them with you and you should pass these concerns on to the RI at the earliest opportunity. If for any reason you feel unable to discuss the matter with the RI, you should contact Estyn and ask to speak to the relevant assistant director for your sector.

As the nominee, it may be worthwhile to share Estyn's 'How we inspect' and 'What we inspect' documents with other staff members. This could provide staff with useful insight into the inspection process. On our website, there is a range of documents that you may find helpful to read before the inspection, including supplementary guidance on a variety of inspection issues.

## Section B: Inspection activities

This section will enable you to have a better understanding of:

- what the team will do during the inspection

- your role in team meetings

The size of the team and the length of the inspection will be consistent across apprenticeship inspections. **Annex 1** describes how inspectors will use their time during the inspection in the apprenticeship sector. Please read through the information relevant to your type of college. It will be useful to share this information with staff and governors before the inspection.

Fifteen days following notification 2/3 inspectors will visit subcontractors/partners to undertake interviews of key staff and to meet and observe learners off-the-job.

Monday morning will be the start of the five day activity. The full team of inspectors will start their activity from around 9 am and may initially visit subcontractors and partners before making their way to the baseroom during the week. Other inspectors may meet in the baseroom for an initial meeting at around 12.30. All inspectors and the nominee will attend the meeting either face-to-face or remotely (the RI will arrange the exact time with the CEO/principal in the initial remote planning meeting).

The first activity will be the pre-inspection team meeting. The RI will include the following on the agenda:

- Welcome and introductions
- Domestic arrangements, health and safety issues, and safeguarding arrangements
- Team responsibilities – allocation of inspection areas and writing sections of the report
- Learner visits on and off-the-job
- Timetables of visits for 10 inspectors
- Meeting schedule for the IAs
- Evening team meetings
- Arrangements for feeding back on the last day of the inspection

This meeting will also provide an early opportunity for the CEO/principal to draw any context-related issues to the team's attention, for example the impact of the pandemic on the provider.

**Daily team meetings** are a very important part of the inspection process. As nominee, you should attend all team meetings, including the pre-inspection team meeting.

Team meetings will be led by the RI will take the form of feedback from each inspectors regarding their findings from observations, meetings and any other activities undertaken during the day. The nominee will be present in these meetings and will be given the opportunity to seek clarification or to bring other evidence.

A good nominee is well prepared and well briefed, and contributes positively to team discussions. You may be asked your advice about where the team can obtain certain evidence or the best person with whom inspectors can discuss a specific aspect of the provider's work.

Do not be afraid to ask for clarification if there is something that you do not understand. You are the person who is most likely to be asked to explain the inspection findings to other staff and to help move the provider forward following the inspection so it is important that you know why inspectors have come to their evaluations.

Please read the following examples of three very different nominees and their role in team meetings

**Example A**

Context: the first evening I team meeting

*During the team meeting, I was able to take notes of things I wished the team to be aware of and additional information that I felt may be useful to them. This was very helpful. I felt confident to contribute to the discussions and was able to use my knowledge of the provider to provide useful context for the team. While I didn't challenge anything that the team said, I did direct them to where more information could be found. For example, the RI mentioned that the provider didn't appear to be involved much with sharing good practice with subcontractors and partners. I was able to point the inspectors to an initiative that the provider had led and engaged all subcontractor partners in events.*

The nominee in example A is well prepared and knows where evidence can be found and is engaging positively with the inspection process.

**Example B**

Context: the team meeting at the end of the first full day of the inspection.

*One of the team inspectors had observed groups of learners off-the-job during the day and fed this back to the team. They said that the practical skills demonstrated were below the level expected for the stage of programme. The RI said that the team should look for further evidence about practical skills development across the learning areas. I didn't say anything but felt angry that a few groups of learners could impact negatively. I should have asked whether anyone had seen any evidence of stronger practical skills development in the same learning areas. I wish that I had told the team more about the successful work we do in encouraging higher level practical skills development.*

The nominee in example B is far too passive. This nominee has additional evidence and information but is uncomfortable in bringing this to the attention of the team and thinks that this may appear 'too pushy' and may reflect badly on the nominee or the provider. The nominee's reticence is not helpful for the inspection team.

**Example C**

Context: the second evening provider team meeting. The team are discussing the Inspection Area 3 and are focusing on teaching, training and assessment. A peer inspector says that the majority of the teaching, training and assessment they have observed so far has been ineffective. The RI asks for elaboration, and they go on to say that the questioning was limited to closed questions and that the theory work wasn't challenging enough. As a result, learners become bored and made little progress.

*I asked the RI if they checked the peer inspector's work as in my opinion they are totally wrong. I know the PI has only been in woodwork sessions this week – I'm their line manager and I know for a fact that the staff there are excellent teachers, trainers and assessors. I asked the peer inspector what her experience was of observing teaching. I'm going to pop down to woodwork tomorrow morning to give them my support, tell them that that PI's criticisms are nonsense.*

This defensive and argumentative approach is inappropriate and unhelpful. The protocol makes clear that the role is not that of an advocate or defender of the provider. If you share the details of the team's discussions with staff, you will breach the confidentiality of the team.

It would have been more helpful for the nominee to comment at the team meeting that they are surprised by inspectors' findings, but accept that this is what was observed. They could provide inspectors with records of the provider's own monitoring and scrutiny of learners' work over time, for example in woodwork. Listening to the team discussion will provide the nominee and the provider with a helpful understanding of why the provision is less effective than the provider's leaders believe it to be.

**Gathering evidence**

The inspection team will undertake a range of activities to gather evidence during the inspection, including learning walks, session observations, scrutiny of learners' work and meetings with learners and staff, as well as on and off-the-job sessions.

Inspectors will also look at a range of documentation, for example minutes of leadership and governance meetings. They will use this documentation to find information about the provider's work and identify areas for further discussion. They will not, however, evaluate the quality of the documentation itself.

Providers are not required to provide inspectors with a self-evaluation report either before or during the inspection. However, providers are welcome to provide inspectors with any documentation regarding their evaluation and improvement work that they feel might be useful or relevant.

Inspectors will take every opportunity to talk to learners. They will ask learners to show them their work and discuss it with them. The RI and provider will schedule timetabled activities were inspectors can meet with learners on and off-the-job to discuss and review their work.

When evaluating learners' work, inspectors will focus on the progress that learners make over time. They will consider how well the provision provides learners with worthwhile and meaningful opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Inspectors may ask the provider to provide further examples of learners' work if necessary, for example work they have completed digitally.

When visiting sessions, inspectors may carry out a session observation of part or a full session, or they may visit part of a session as part of a learning walk. The length of these visits will vary between sectors – the RI will discuss this with the CEO/principal in advance of the inspection so that staff will know what to expect. Where there has been a full session observation, the inspector will hold a brief professional dialogue with the teacher, trainer or assessor observed, either at the end of the session or later in the day/week. Inspectors do not 'grade' individual lessons/sessions.

When evaluating teaching, training and assessment, inspectors will focus on the **impact** of the provider's provision on learners' progress and the standards they achieve. We do not have any 'preferred approach' regarding teaching and assessment practices. There are no approaches that inspectors 'expect' to see in sessions, such as the sharing of learning objectives or the use of a plenary session. Inspectors do not expect to see the full range of skills being developed in every session. When considering teachers' feedback, inspectors will focus on the impact that it has on learners' progress.

## Section C: Frequently asked questions

### 1. Do we have to change our timetables if the RI asks?

The RI and nominee will review the activities taking place and agree a schedule of visits to learners on and off-the-job. The RI will not ask for any scheduled sessions to be changed.

### 2. If I think the team has not seen something important, what do I do?

It is very important that you bring any significant evidence to the team's attention. This does not have to be confrontational, but you should ensure that the RI knows the significance that you place on this particular evidence.

### 3. If there is a special event taking place in provider during the inspection, should I let the reporting inspector know?

Of course. However, inspectors cannot guarantee that they will be able to attend any special events.

### 4. If I disagree with what the team says in their meeting, what can I do?

You may bring any additional information and evidence to the attention of the team. While they will consider this information, this may not be reflected in a change of evaluation of that area. The team will come to its own view.

### 5. Can I be asked to leave a team meeting?

It can be challenging to listen to an inspection team discuss and reach evaluations on your provider, especially where those are not in line with your own views, and you may often feel the urge to interject. However, you need to remember that the nominee's role is not to defend the provider, but to direct the team to relevant evidence and to facilitate the inspection.

It is rare for the RI to ask a nominee to leave a team meeting. However, if you behave in a way that disrupts the smooth running of the inspection, for example constantly challenging the team's findings, then the RI may ask you to leave the meeting. Before this occurs, the RI will remind you about the protocol that was agreed and explain that you are stepping outside the terms of the agreement.

**6. Do I need to make sure that the team have a selection of learners' written work including ILPs?**

The inspection team need to see examples of learners' ILPs and other written work. Where possible, especially during off-the-job activities, inspectors will look at learners' written work, including that stored electronically.

**7. Will the inspectors meet with all subcontractors and partners? ?**

Inspectors will try to visit all subcontractors and partners, during which they may visit learners on and off-the-job and meet with key staff.

**8. As nominee, can I see the Team Inspection Forms completed by members of the inspection team?**

No, these are confidential to the inspection team.

## Part 3: After the inspection

**After** the inspection you should:

- attend the feedback meeting
- contribute to checking the factual accuracy of the draft of report
- contribute to the completion of the post-inspection questionnaire (PIQ), which the IC will send to you after the inspection
- play a full part in devising the action plan following the inspection

## Annex 1: A ‘walk through’ the inspection

The initial three day activity will take place 15 days after the initial notification of inspection. Two to three inspectors will visit subcontractors/partners to meet with key staff and visit learners on and off-the-job. The activities may take Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday or Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

### Following Monday

The inspection team of 10 inspectors begin their activity of visiting learners on and off-the-job. These activities may commence in different geographical locations to meet the contract delivery.

The team meeting, at approximately 13.00, may be accessed face-to-face or remotely. The meeting will be led by the RI and the provider will be given the opportunity to give a short presentation regarding their organisation, the successes and challenges. The meeting will also contain a health and safety and safeguarding briefing.

Inspectors will visit learners on and-off-the job across the contract delivery partners.

The team meeting at approximately 16.30 will share the team’s findings from the day’s activities. The meeting may be attended face-to-face or remotely, and is led by the RI.

### Tuesday & Wednesday

Inspectors will visit learners on and-off-the job across the contract delivery partners.

Team meeting at approximately 16.30 to share the team’s findings from the day’s activities. Meeting may be attended face-to-face or remotely. Meeting led by RI.

### Thursday

Inspectors review evidence and write their draft main evaluations during the morning.

At approximately 13:00, moderation meeting takes place. Meeting is led by the RI.

### Friday

Team meeting and preparation for feedback during the morning

Feedback meeting led by the RI sharing main evaluations with the provider. Meeting will be attended by the inspection team, key managers and leaders from the provider and Welsh Government contract manager who is to be invited by the provider