

Glossary of Terms

Terminology	Description
CIF	Common Inspection Framework - sets out the principals of inspection and includes key questions used to make judgements about the quality of provision
CM	DWP Contract Manager - responsible for tendering for and managing DWP contracts
CMF	Contract Management Framework - a risk-based approach in the management of all DWP mainstream contracts
Contractor	Organisation that has entered into a contract with DWP to supply goods and/or services
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions
ESTYN	Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales - responsible for the external inspection of DWP funded provision in Wales
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland - responsible for the external inspection of DWP funded provision in Scotland from January 2010
Momenta	Accreditation System used by DWP and providers to share and record inspection and self-assessment information
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education and Training - responsible for the external inspection of DWP provision in England
Participant	Person undertaking DWP funded provision
Quality-support mailbox	Central Quality Team email - used by providers/CM's and the inspectorates to send information. The address is: qualitysupport@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
PDP	Provider Development Plan – used by providers to record actions to address areas for improvement identified in the SAR or external inspection
Preparation for Life & Work	Sector Subject Area under which Ofsted award DWP funded provision grades
Provider	An organisation funded by DWP to provide training to participants
Provider Quality Team	Responsible for managing the relationship with the Inspectorates (Ofsted/Estyn/HMIE) and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. Also promotes quality and continuous improvement across all DWP Contracted Employment Provision
Prime Contractor	An organisation contracted to directly provide a substantial proportion of provision, sub-contract a proportion of provision and manage/monitor the performance/quality of the sub-contractors and their own provision
QAQ	Quality Assessment Questionnaire – providers complete a QAQ which is assessed by the DWP Contract Managers and used to award a quality risk rating
Quality Framework	Provides the basis of our approach to maintaining and improving quality in DWP funded provision.
QT	Quality Team – responsible for co-ordinating inspection

	activity, expert domain for self assessment reports and promoting quality and continuous improvement across all DWP providers
SAR	Self-Assessment Report - providers are contractually obliged to produce a SAR and upload it to Momenta annually
SSA	Sector Subject Area(s) – categories used by Ofsted to attribute inspection grades
Sub-Contractor	An organisation engaged by a Prime Contractor to deliver a proportion of the specified provision

External Inspection

DWP Contracted Employment Provision is subject to independent inspection by Ofsted in England,,ESTYN in Wales and, from January 2010, HMIE in Scotland.

The Inspection Frameworks

1. The Inspectorates use a similar Inspection Frameworks which set out the principles of inspection and ensures a uniform approach is applied across the sector. The questions focus primarily on the participant's experience through the evaluation of:
 - how well participants achieve;
 - how effective the teaching training and learning are;
 - how well the programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of participants;
 - how well participants are guided and supported, and;
 - how effective the leadership and management is in raising achievement and supporting participants.
2. Each Inspection Framework includes key questions which the Inspectorate's use to make judgements about the quality of provision. For further information about the Inspection Frameworks, refer to annex 1.

The Purpose of Inspection

3. The focus of inspection is primarily on the experiences and expectations of individuals whilst on provision. The purpose of inspection is to:
 - give an independent, public account of the quality of education and training, the standards achieved and the management of resources;
 - bring about improvement by identifying strengths and areas for improvement and highlighting good and poor practice; and
 - inform the Secretary of State and funding bodies about the quality and standards of education and training.

INSPECTION PROCESS IN ENGLAND

Scheduling of inspections

4. Ofsted operate a 4 year inspection cycle for DWP funded providers. DWP is responsible for ensuring Ofsted have current information relating to the provider base, within an agreed timescale. Ofsted collate this information with data from other funding streams and use this to determine the annual programme of inspection.
5. The inspection schedule is based around school terms, which vary slightly from year to year. As a guide, the three terms are as follows:
 - 1st April – 31st August (5 months)
 - 1st September – 31st December (4 months)
 - 1st January – 31st March (3 months)
6. Ofsted produce an inspection schedule of providers for each term and consult the DWP Provider Quality Team to ensure those selected still have a contract with DWP and are in scope for inspection.

Notification of Inspection

7. You will be notified of your inspection 6 to 8 weeks in advance. The Inspectorate will notify you in writing when your inspection will take place including details of forthcoming Preparation for Inspection events and support materials available on their website.

The Provider Nominee

8. You will be invited to nominate a key member of staff to work with the inspection team. The nominee plays an important role in ensuring the inspection team has access to all relevant evidence and that the inspection runs effectively. The nominee must have the authority to challenge judgements and have an extensive knowledge of the provision.

Preparing for Inspection

9. Ofsted will invite your nominee to a one day 'Preparation for Inspection event'. These are run on behalf of Ofsted by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. The event explains the inspection process including specific actions and tasks you should complete within the first few weeks following notification of inspection. Estyn do not deliver similar events as they have a smaller provider base and meet with providers several times, prior to inspection.

Inspection Toolkit

10. Comprehensive guidance is available to help you prepare for inspection, including a handbook and toolkit which gives detailed information about inspection and what can be expected. See annex 1 for links to access the information via the Ofsted website.

Data Requirements

11. Ofsted require performance data spanning up to 3 years (specific periods to be agreed) for data analysis during inspection. This information should be supplied a maximum of four weeks prior to inspection.

Submitting the SAR to OFSTED

12. There is no requirement to update your SAR for the purpose of inspection but you may choose to do so.
13. The information in your SAR enables the lead inspector to draft their pre-inspection commentary which they use to prepare for inspection and forms the basis for their team briefing. Your nominee will receive a copy of the pre-inspection commentary prior to inspection.
14. When notified of your inspection, you will be required to send your current SAR direct to the Inspectorate within an agreed timescale. An accurate and concise SAR enables the Lead Inspector to plan resources and provides a valuable source of reference prior to and during inspection.

The Inspection Team

15. The Inspectorate appoints an inspection team, led by a full-time Lead Inspector who is responsible for planning and managing your inspection. The Lead Inspector is also responsible for drafting your inspection report, using information gathered from their team. The inspection team comprises of full-time and/or associate inspectors and may include an occupational expert for specialist provision. The size of the team and duration of the inspection is determined by the number of participants and variety of locations.
16. The Lead Inspector will contact your nominee to inform them of the inspection dates and arrange a planning meeting. The Inspectorate also notifies the DWP Provider Quality Team of the date, time and location of the planning meeting. On receiving details of the planning meeting, the DWP Provider Quality Team will notify the relevant DWP Contract Manager.

The Planning Meeting

17. This meeting usually takes place on your premises, approximately 4 to 8 weeks before the inspection. The Lead Inspector, nominee and other

appropriate provider representatives as required, all attend the meeting. A member of the DWP Provider Quality Team or your DWP Contract Manager will attend on behalf of the funding body.

18. During the planning meeting the Lead Inspector explains the inspection process and clarifies the roles of the nominee and the team. The Lead Inspector determines the scope of inspection using information supplied by DWP and your nominee. This includes the self-assessment report and details of all participants on provision including times and locations of their training/work placements. The inspection team use this information to plan a schedule of observations, interviews and visits to participants, staff, employers etc. You will also have an opportunity to inform the Lead Inspector of any additional events/training or placements you would particularly like the team to observe.

The Inspection

19. The inspection team collect evidence from various sources such as policy documents, individual development plans and observing training sessions/reviews. Documents relating to the participants progress and assessment are examined, along with quality assurance documents and data.
20. With prior agreement, the inspectors will visit sites where provision is delivered, including sub-contractors premises and examine participants' work/observe them at work. They will interview a sample of staff, participants, trainers, work placement staff, employers and 3rd parties, as discussed at the planning meeting.
21. Where appropriate, inspectors observe and grade formal and informal training, coaching sessions and job search sessions. They examine how programmes are planned, delivered and assessed, how participants are guided and supported and how effectively equality of opportunity is promoted. For more information refer to the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk
22. The inspection team focus on the individual's experience on provision and make judgements against the key questions in Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework. They collect evidence to identify strengths, areas for improvement and satisfactory areas. Your nominee will be kept informed of progress and preliminary inspection findings at the end of each day. Where appropriate, the inspection team may request further information to clarify an issue, or your nominee may supply additional information to challenge/support judgements.

Sub-Contractors

23. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and performance of all your contracted provision, including that delivered by sub-contractors. The inspectorate will consider all of your sub-contracted provision as part of the overall prime contract inspection. Every sub-contractor will be awarded a judgement under Key Question 1, Achievement and Standards.
24. The inspectorate does not publish separate summary reports for sub-contractors as their details and findings are included in prime providers' reports. Where a sub-contractor is visited as part of an inspection however, they will receive written feedback on the findings at the end of the visit. For further information on the inspection of sub-contractors, refer to the guidance produced by Ofsted, included in Annex 2.

Grading

25. Grading takes place on the last day of the inspection when the inspection team meet for the grading meeting. Your nominee will attend this meeting but is not involved in the decision making. The following 4 point scale and grade descriptors are used:
 - Grade 1 - OUTSTANDING
 - Grade 2 - GOOD
 - Grade 3 - SATISFACTORY
 - Grade 4 - INADEQUATE

Grade Structure

Ofsted have recently updated their CIF however, for consistency, most DWP provision will be graded using the previous framework until the end of the current inspection cycle, 31 March 2010.

The current grading structure for most DWP provision is:

Overall Effectiveness:- a grade and a judgement on the overall effectiveness based on one of the following descriptors:

- overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding
- overall effectiveness of the provision is good
- overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory
- overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate

Capacity to Improve:- a grade and a judgement on the capacity to improve based on one of the following descriptors:

- demonstrated in a good position to maintain high quality of provision

- demonstrated in a good position to make improvements
- demonstrated has sufficient capacity to make improvements
- demonstrated that it is in a poor position to make improvements

A grade for overall Achievement and Standards for preparation for life and work; included in sub-contracted provision:- based on findings relating to Key Question 1 of the CIF

A grade for overall Quality of Provision:- based on findings relating to Key Questions 2 – 4 of the CIF

A grade for Leadership and Management:- based on findings relating to Key Question 5 of the CIF including contributory grade for Equality of Opportunity

A judgement on the level of confidence in the Self Assessment Report

Please note: provision new to inspection such as PLP are graded using Ofsted's new grading structure within their new CIF (see annex 1)

Final feedback meeting

26. The inspection team present their detailed findings and grades at the feedback meeting on the final day of inspection. Your nominee may invite additional colleagues to this meeting, including participants and sub-contractors if appropriate.
27. A representative from DWP also attends the meeting. This should be your DWP Contract Manager or where this is not possible, a member of the DWP Provider Quality Team. Your DWP Contract Manager will feed back the findings from your inspection to the DWP Provider Quality Team.
28. The grades are provisional and remain confidential until the report has been moderated and published, usually within 6 weeks.

The report

29. All inspection reports are thoroughly moderated and edited by the Inspectorate to check for consistency of style and use of plain English. A copy is then sent to you to check for technical accuracy prior to publication.
30. The reports are usually published on the inspectorate's website within 6-8 weeks following inspection. A copy of the report is sent electronically to you and DWP will be notified when the report is published on the Ofsted website.

Following inspection

31. After inspection, you will be required to update your Provider Development Plan to address areas for improvement identified during inspection. Your plan should include:
 - actions to be taken to address each area for improvement;
 - person responsible for each action;
 - realistic dates for completion of each action;
 - intended outcome of each action;
 - criteria for evaluating the extent to which outcomes have been achieved.
32. Your updated plan should be submitted to your DWP Contract Manager within 4 weeks of receipt of your inspection report. The DWP Contract Manager will assess the appropriateness of your PDP and use it to inform their contract management process.

Re-inspection

33. Providers judged to be inadequate are subject to re-inspection. If the Sector Subject Area (SSA) (i.e. Preparation for Life and Work) and/or Leadership and Management is judged to be inadequate, the provision will be fully reinspected.
34. Re-inspection is carried out over an extended period involving a planning meeting, one or two review visits and a final feedback meeting within 12-15 months of your initial inspection. The Lead Inspector will contact you to arrange the planning meeting which is attended by a member of the DWP Provider Quality Team and/or your DWP Contract Manager.
35. The reinspection report will include judgements on the effectiveness of action taken since your previous inspection. The report will also include a statement of whether or not the provision remains inadequate overall.
36. Prior to re-inspection, Ofsted will require up to date information on participant numbers, progression and achievement.

Post re-inspection

37. After re-inspection, if your provision is judged to be satisfactory, you will return to the normal inspection cycle. If you are judged to be unsatisfactory at re-inspection, DWP will consider any remedial action to be taken.
38. In the majority of cases, the DWP Contract Manager will work with you to agree an Emergency Action Plan. The Emergency Action Plan records the actions required and where appropriate, the support available to accelerate the rectifying of areas for improvement highlighted during re-inspection. The Emergency Action Plan must be

submitted to Ofsted for comment within 8 weeks of the report publication.

39. Your DWP Contract Manager will closely monitor the execution of your Emergency Action Plan, which should be fully implemented within twenty-six weeks following publication of the re-inspection report.
40. Where DWP considers the Emergency Action Plan has been effective you will return to the normal inspection cycle. If your DWP Contract Manager decides the Emergency Action Plan has not brought about the required improvements in provision, they will decide what further action, within their power, is to be taken. In some instances DWP may consider formal breach action which could result in contract termination.

Deferring an Inspection

41. It is possible, in **exceptional circumstances**, for an inspection to be deferred, if there are serious and justifiable reasons for doing so. You should request a deferral in writing through your DWP Contract Manager who will notify the DWP Provider Quality Team.
42. Where a deferral is supported, the DWP Provider Quality Team makes a formal request to Ofsted/Estyn to defer the inspection. The final decision to defer an inspection rests with the Inspectorate and they will notify you in writing.

Complaints

43. If you are dissatisfied with an aspect of the inspection, a complaint may be made at any stage during inspection or up to 30 days following publication of your report. In exceptional circumstances, complaints may be considered up to a maximum of three months after the inspection. For further information on complaints procedures, please see the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Monitoring Visits

44. If your provision is judged to be satisfactory or you have achieved a satisfactory judgement for overall effectiveness after reinspection, you will receive a monitoring visit. These one-day visits are usually carried out by two inspectors approximately 15 months following your initial inspection. You will be notified at least 8 weeks in advance of a monitoring visit.
45. The purpose of the visit is to check the quality of provision has been maintained or has improved. The visits are themed; using evidence gathered during your original inspection and include a primary focus on achievements and standards. The Lead Inspector will determine the themes of the visit and you will be required to produce a draft

programme which they will approve prior to the visit and confirm in writing.

46. The inspectors identify the distance travelled since the last inspection or re-inspection and make judgements about how effectively you have dealt with the areas for improvement and key challenges previously identified. They will evaluate your Provider Development Plan and judge how well and how quickly it is bringing about improvements. You are not required to present any additional data for the visit but may do so if you wish.
47. Verbal feedback will be given following the monitoring visit and you will receive a letter summarising the findings, copied to DWP and published on the Ofsted website.
48. In some circumstances, the DWP Provider Quality Team may request a monitoring visit for a provider. This may occur when a provider has undergone substantial changes to their organisational structure since their previous inspection or when an emergency action plan has been fully implemented, following a re-inspection.

Inspection Process in Wales

49. Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. They carry out inspections of Providers in Wales in accordance with Estyn's Common Inspection Framework (see annex 1). Detailed inspection guidance for DWP contracted employment provision is available via the Estyn website. www.estyn.gov.uk
50. Estyn have produced tailored guidance for providers on how to interpret the CIF for DWP provision in Wales. This guidance can also be found on their website.

Scheduling of Inspections

51. Estyn's inspection cycle spans 6 years although you may be visited several times as part of themed inspections determined annually by the Welsh Assembly, or requested by DWP.
52. DWP is responsible for ensuring Estyn have current information relating to the provider base and the DWP Provider Quality Team supplies details of providers. The programme of inspections is agreed annually and amended if necessary, in consultation throughout the year. DWP indicate what aspect of provision they would like inspected and the details of the providers who offer it.
53. Estyn carry out inspections in three levels of intensity, across a range of Inspection Areas (similar to the Areas of Learning used by OFSTED). These are characterised as follows:

- Full Inspection: you would be inspected against the 7 Key Questions of the CIF across all inspection areas at all levels within your company. Inspectors evaluate and report on:
 - all key questions across the company; and
 - Key Question 1 for each inspection area
 - Standard Inspection: you would be inspected against the 7 Key Questions of the CIF across fewer inspection areas. The areas selected include a representative sample of grades awarded at previous inspections. Inspectors evaluate and report on:
 - all key questions across the company; and
 - Key Question 1 for a sample of about 50% of inspection areas
 - Short Inspection: you would be inspected against the 7 Key Questions of the CIF across fewer inspection areas than the standard inspection. The areas selected include a representative sample of grades awarded at previous inspections. Inspectors evaluate and report on:
 - all key questions across the company; and
 - key question 1 for a sample of evaluations based on around 25% of inspection
54. Note: New or merged providers would have a full inspection irrespective of the category indicated by historical data and information.

Notification of Inspection

55. You will be notified of inspection approximately three months in advance. Occasionally however, shorter notice may be given, for example for thematic inspections or when there is a late change to the inspection programme. The minimum notice you will be given is two weeks.
56. At least 12 weeks prior to inspection, Estyn will inform you and the DWP Provider Quality Team when your inspection will take place and the name of the reporting inspector. The reporting inspector will then contact you and DWP to arrange a pre-inspection planning meeting.

The Planning Meeting

57. The Reporting Inspector and their deputy from Estyn attend the planning meeting with your nominee and any other provider staff as appropriate. A representative from the DWP Provider Quality Team also attends and will invite your DWP Contract Manager. If your DWP Contract Manager is unable to attend, the Inspector may contact them prior to inspection, to discuss any outstanding issues of which they need to be aware.

The Inspection

58. The inspection team collect evidence from various sources such as observing training sessions, reviews, reading documents/individual development plans, visiting work placements and interviewing participants, employees and partners/other parties. They examine how programmes are planned, delivered and assessed, how participants are guided and supported and how effectively equality of opportunity is promoted. For more information please see the Estyn website www.Estyn.gov.uk
59. Inspectors interview a sample of staff, participants, trainers, work placement staff, employers and 3rd parties. They visit the sites where provision is delivered, both formal and informal and examine participants' work and observe them at work. Where appropriate, inspectors observe and grade formal and informal training, coaching sessions and job search sessions.
60. Documents relating to your participants progress and assessment are examined, along with quality assurance documents and data.
61. The inspection team focus on the participant's experience on provision and make judgements against the key questions in the Common Inspection Framework. They collect evidence from various sources to identify strengths, areas for improvement and satisfactory areas. Your nominee is kept informed of progress and preliminary inspection findings at the end of each day. Where appropriate, the inspection team may request further information to clarify an issue, or your nominee may supply additional information to challenge/support judgements.

Data Requirements

62. Six weeks prior to inspection the DWP Contract Manager supplies brief information to the reporting inspector, such as contract details, the Inspection Areas in which training is provided, data on recruitment, retention and attainment. You will also receive a copy of this data and it is your responsibility to check the information for accuracy. If any anomalies are identified, you must notify your DWP Contract Manager and the reporting inspector.

Grading

63. Grading takes place on the last day of the inspection when the inspection team meet for the grading meeting.
64. The following 5 point scale and grade descriptors are used:
 - Grade 1 – Good with outstanding features
 - Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings
 - Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings
 - Grade 4 – Some good features but shortcomings in important areas

- Grade 5 – Many important shortcomings
65. A judgement is also given for the following:
- the self assessment process;
 - the quality of the self-assessment report; and
 - the match between the self-assessment report and the inspection findings.

Final Feedback Meeting

66. The inspection team present their detailed findings and grades at the feedback meeting on the final day of inspection. Your nominee may invite additional colleagues to this meeting and your DWP Contract Manager should also attend. If the Contract Manager is unavailable, a representative from the DWP Provider Quality Team will attend and provide feedback. The grades are provisional and remain confidential until the report has been moderated and published, usually within 8 weeks.

The Report

67. Estyn reports are thoroughly moderated and edited by the Inspectorate. A copy is sent to you and the performance Improvement Unit within 25 days of the completed inspection to check for technical accuracy prior to publication.
68. Inspection reports are usually published on the Estyn website within 6-8 weeks following inspection. The final published report is sent to DWP within 50 days. An electronic copy is also sent to the DWP Provider Quality Team for distribution to relevant colleagues within DWP.

Following Inspection

69. Two weeks following inspection, Estyn provide an initial feedback report for you to address areas for improvement identified during inspection. You should use this feedback to update your Provider Development Plan which should then be submitted to your DWP Contract Manager within 4 weeks of receipt of the inspection report.

Reinspection

70. If you are graded 4 or 5 for key questions 1 or 5 you will be re-inspected, regardless of the grades awarded for other key questions.
71. Estyn will notify you at least 12 weeks prior to reinspection which should take place within 12-20 months of the original inspection.

Complaints

72. If you wish to make a complaint regarding your inspection, you should complete the post-inspection questionnaire and return it to Estyn. Complaints must be made within 3 months following publication of your inspection report. For further information on complaints procedures, please see the Estyn website www.estyn.gov.uk.

Cross Border Inspections

Wales

73. If you deliver provision in both England and Wales, or for example your company's Head Office is in England and delivery is in Wales, Estyn will take the lead and will discuss/agree the arrangements with Ofsted on an individual basis, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement..

Scotland

74. If there is an overlap across the border, provision to include in the inspection will be considered on an individual basis through discussions between HMIE and Ofsted if appropriate. This will be communicated/agreed at the planning meeting.

Safeguarding

75. DWP providers should adopt a whole organisational approach to Safeguarding participants. Inspectors will evaluate whether providers are taking sensible steps to ensure safeguarding and that providers are complying with legislation regarding Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority's website explains the responsibilities of employers, employees and volunteers with regard to the safeguarding of vulnerable groups;

[ISA website](#)

Useful Websites and Publications

Department for Work and Pensions

Link to DWP Quality Framework

[The DWP Quality Framework - DWP](#)

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspect DWP contracted employment provision in England. Their website provides useful information including the Inspection Toolkit and the Inspection Handbook.. In addition, providers in England can access Ofsted's CIF via this website

www.ofsted.gov.uk:

Link to Ofsted Common Inspection Framework

(Note: the grading system within this framework will apply to all DWP contracted employment provision from April 2010 – see para X)

[Common Inspection Framework for inspecting education and training / General / Other / Browse all by / Forms and guidance / Ofsted home / Ofsted - Ofsted](#)

Link to Handbook for Inspecting Work Related & Adult and Community Learning

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070077>

Link to Inspection Toolkit

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Education-and-skills/Learning-and-skills/Toolkit-contents>

Estyn

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. Estyn carries out inspections of DWP contracted employment provision in Wales in accordance with Estyn's Common Inspection Framework. Providers can access this site for guidance on the inspection of specific provision and links to the Estyn CIF.

www.estyn.gov.uk:

Link to Estyn Common Inspection Framework

www.Estyn.gov.uk/publications/CommonInspectionFramework.pdf

Link to inspection guidance for work-based learning and JCP programmes

http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Guidance_on_the_Inspection_of_Providers_of_Work_Based_Learning_and_Jobcentre_Plus_2007.pdf

HMIE

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland – due to inspect DWP funded provision from January 2010

[HM Inspectorate of Education](#)

Learning & Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service is the new sector-owned body, formed from CEL and QIA to develop excellent and sustainable FE provision across the sector.

[Learning and Skills Improvement Service Home](#)

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

NIACE is an independent, non-governmental organisation for adult learning in England and Wales. It is a registered charity and represents the interests of all adult learners – especially those who have benefited least from education and training. NIACE aims to increase the number of adults engaged in formal and informal learning in England and Wales by improving opportunities and widening access to learning opportunities.

www.niace.org.uk:

Ofsted Guidance on the inspection of subcontractors as part of the Jobcentre Plus prime contract Inspections.

Introduction

In July 2006 Jobcentre Plus changed its contracting arrangements for all mainstream New Deal programmes and Programme Centre provision, moving to a prime contractor structure within a geographic area. Correspondingly, and starting with the second cycle of inspections, the unit of inspection is now at a prime contract level.

Each prime contract will have a separate inspection and published inspection report. To evaluate the performance of the prime contract, the inspection will take account of all subcontracted provision as well as provision delivered by the prime contractor itself. Judgements in the prime contract report will reflect the quality of provision and performance across the whole of the contract, including the effectiveness of contract management arrangements.

Inspection of prime contracts, including subcontractors will continue to be against the Common Inspection Framework (CIF). However, the inspection of subcontractors will not necessarily cover the whole of the CIF but may address selected themes or agenda items. Inspection of all subcontractors will include an evaluation of participants' achievements. Other themes are likely to include the quality of provision and operational management. Inspection visits to subcontractors will normally be carried out by one or two inspectors over one or two days.

Inspection planning - visits to subcontractors

In the weeks before the inspection the lead inspector will collate detailed background information on the prime contractor and all subcontractors. At a planning meeting with the prime contractor which takes place around six weeks before the inspection, the lead inspector will propose arrangements for the inspection of subcontractors. Where a subcontractor has recently been inspected (usually within the previous 12 months) and the DWP provision was included, the lead inspector may decide that a further inspection visit is not required. Inspection evidence from the earlier inspection will be used as part of the prime contract inspection. The exception to this is job outcome data where the most current figures will be used. Similarly the lead inspector may decide not to visit a subcontractor where the provision is too small or too new to warrant an inspection visit, or in other special circumstances. Arrangements for visits to subcontractors may be amended between the planning meeting and the inspection, should circumstances change.

The lead inspector will prepare an individual agenda for each subcontractor visit. The prime contractor's nominee and/or the subcontractor will be invited to suggest one area to be included on the agenda. Following the planning meeting the nominee should brief the subcontractors on the details of the

inspection visits. The nominee will also be asked to supply a brief profile for each subcontractor. Visits to subcontractors will be scheduled for the beginning to middle of the inspection week. Each visit should begin with inspectors reviewing relevant documents and an interview with the subcontractor's representative which should, together, take approximately one hour.

Inspection planning – providing performance data

Judgements on the performance of the prime contract as a whole, and that of each subcontractor will be made at every inspection. Before the inspection, prime contractors are required to agree participants' success data with each subcontractor and submit this to the lead inspector on the standard form supplied by the inspectorate. Any queries around the accuracy of the data must be resolved between the prime contractor and subcontractor before the start of the inspection.

Feedback to subcontractors

At the end of each subcontractor inspection visit, the inspector(s) will hold a brief feedback meeting, to be attended by a representative from both the subcontractor and prime contractor (usually the nominee). The inspector(s) will give verbal feedback outlining strengths and areas for improvement of the provision and often mentioning satisfactory aspects. A written record of the bullet strengths and areas for improvement will be provided, with additional detail to support the bullet judgements. Judgements on the subcontractor will be taken forward to contribute to the prime contract's overall outcomes and inspection report.

Reporting

An inspection report will be published for the prime contract as a whole, informed by the individual inspection judgements for each subcontractor and the provision delivered by the prime contractor. Subcontractors will be named in the report.

Reinspection of inadequate provision

Prime Contracts judged to be inadequate (grade 4) in Preparation for Life and Work and/or Leadership and Management will be subject to reinspection. As part of the reinspection process subcontractors may have a further inspection visit. Subcontractors will not be reinspected in their own right, even if their individual inspection feedback indicates significant areas for improvement in the quality of provision. In such instances, it is expected that the prime contractor's quality improvement arrangements will bring about the necessary improvements.

Dealing with complaints

Subcontractors should raise any issues or concerns with the inspector(s) during the inspection visit. Every effort should be made to resolve differences directly and promptly. Should issues not be resolved with the relevant inspector(s), the subcontractor may speak to the lead inspector and the nominee during the inspection. If a complaint arises or persists after the inspection, the prime contractor may make a complaint in accordance with the guidance in *'Making a Complaint'*, which can be found on the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk