



# **Guidance for Inspectors**

## **What we inspect in men's prisons**

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

## What we inspect in men's prisons

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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## Legal basis for the inspection of men's prisons

Inspections of establishments within His Majesty's Prison (HMP) estate are governed by sections 5A and 43 and Schedule A1 of the Prison Act 1952 (as amended). These provisions set out HM Chief Inspector of Prisons' responsibilities to inspect

- prisons, young offender institutions (YOIs), and secure training centres (STCs) in England and Wales;
- court custody facilities in England and Wales and escorts to and from these facilities; and
- immigration removal centres (IRCs), short-term holding facilities, pre-departure accommodation and escort arrangements throughout the UK.

Schedule 1A of the Prison Act 1952 sets out the Chief Inspector of Prisons' further powers and duties to cooperate and consult with other criminal justice inspectorates and other bodies to delegate any of its functions and ensure inspections by other specified bodies do not place an unreasonable burden on organisations within his remit.

Section 57 of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 confers responsibility for inspecting further education and training funded or secured by the Welsh Ministers to the Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales. Section (3) requires that The Chief Inspector must publish a report of each inspection carried out under this section including views on—

- (a) the quality of the education or training inspected,
- (b) the standards achieved by those receiving that education or training, and
- (c) whether the financial resources made available to the provider of the education or training are managed efficiently and used in a way which provides value for money.<sup>1</sup>

To give effect to these provisions, an Estyn team will be invited by His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons to participate in an exercise, which HMIP may or may not announce to the prison or the public domain. Some inspections are called at very short notice if HMIP data identifies risks that they wish to explore.

HMIP have overall responsibility for the management of the inspection. During these inspections, Estyn works to and within a framework of expectations for prisons and produces written judgements to HMIP's specification. However, Estyn's reporting inspector (RI) is responsible for the conduct and management of Estyn's involvement in the inspection, and for producing an inspection report on education, skills and work

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<sup>1</sup> When commenced, currently still working under ss. 75, 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000

provision at the establishment being inspected for inclusion in HMIP's overall report of the inspection.

Inspectors should be familiar with the [HMIP inspection framework](#) and guidance as well as the '[Expectations](#)' for different types of detention that HMIP use to guide them on inspection.

Further information and guidance about inspection of prisons can be found on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) website:  
[www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons).

### Part 1: What we inspect

#### Introduction

To ensure that prisons are held accountable to the same standard of performance as similar providers, we have chosen explicitly to adopt, to a large extent, our inspection framework for further education colleges. A series of supplementary guidance documents are available on our website that provide further information about our approaches to inspecting various aspects of this framework.

Where adaptations have been made, these have been made to take into account feedback from our stakeholders and the context and aims of education, skills and work activities within the secure estate in Wales.

Estyn inspectors will evaluate the education, skills and work activities within men's prisons against the following expectations.

#### Education, Skills and Work activities

**All prisoners are expected and enabled to engage in education, skills or work activities that increase their employability on release. There are sufficient, suitable education, skills and work places to meet the needs of the population and provision is of a good standard.**

Inspectors evaluate these expectations against these three inspection areas:

Inspection Area 1 – Teaching and learning

Inspection Area 2 - Well-being, care, support and guidance

Inspection Area 3 - Leading and improving

The criteria for each inspection area are set out below.

## Evaluating each inspection area (IA)

Inspection teams will not give overall grades for each inspection area. They will provide a robust and thorough evaluation of the prison's education, skills and work provision and its impact on learning, well-being and learners outcomes.

Inspectors will always include clear evaluations in relation to the main aspects in each inspection area as exemplified below. However, what inspectors report on within each inspection area may differ depending on the context and relative significance of what they find at each prison. Inspectors may report 'by exception'. This means that they may report on some aspects only where there are particular strengths or areas for improvement. Where inspectors identify any interesting or innovative practice that is worthy of sharing more widely, they will include a 'spotlight on...' within the report. HMIP may decide to include these spotlights as 'notable positive practice' within their inspection report. See [here](#) for more guidance on HMIP's approach to notable positive practice.

The inspection team will propose an overarching judgement taking into account the balance of the strengths and areas for development identified during the inspection, using HMIP's four-point scale below:

### **Outcomes for prisoners are good.**

There is no evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in any significant areas.

### **Outcomes for prisoners are reasonably good.**

There is evidence of adverse outcomes for prisoners in only a small number of areas. For the majority, there are no significant concerns. Procedures to safeguard outcomes are in place.

### **Outcomes for prisoners are not sufficiently good.**

There is evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in many areas or particularly in those areas of greatest importance to the well-being of prisoners. Problems/concerns, if left unattended, are likely to become areas of serious concern.

### **Outcomes for prisoners are poor.**

There is evidence that the outcomes for prisoners are seriously affected by current practice. There is a failure to ensure even adequate treatment of and/or conditions for prisoners. Immediate remedial action is required.

The overarching judgement proposed by Estyn's team will inform HMIPs overall judgement for Purposeful Activity and be recorded in the inspection report.

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Where inspectors identify serious shortcomings in one or more inspection areas, follow-up activity will normally be arranged in discussion with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. There is further guidance on concerns and priority concerns below and about follow-up activity in 'How we inspect'.

### The inspection report

Following an inspection, Estyn inspectors will produce a report for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for inclusion into their overarching report of the prison inspected. The report will also be shared with the prison's governor and leadership of education, skills and work activities and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in the form of a letter. Estyn will publish its report on its website at the time of or shortly after publication by HMIP of the overarching report for the inspection.

### Concerns and priority concerns

At the end of our report, the team will include a set of concerns agreed by the team identifying the key areas that need to be improved. Concerns should come directly from the content of the report and will be set out in order of priority as Priority Concerns and Concerns.

**Priority concerns** are the areas of concern that require immediate attention by leaders and managers. They are designed to help leaders prioritise areas of weakness and should be addressed first in order to improve outcomes for prisoners.

**Areas of concern** identify the areas where there are significant weaknesses in the treatment of and conditions for prisoners. To be addressed they will require change in practice and/or new or redirected resources.

Priority concerns, along with selected areas of concern, will be reviewed at an independent review of progress or inspection, the focus should be on whether the concern has been resolved and outcomes have improved.

### Terminology

In this guidance we predominantly use the word "learner(s)" for people detained in the secure estate in Wales rather than "prisoner(s)". We do so because in the context of prison education, skills or work activities, we normally consider prisoners who take part in learning, skills and work activities to be learning to maintain or develop skills that will support them to reduce the risk of reoffending and improve their chances of successful

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resettlement on release. We will use the term “prisoner(s)” to describe the general population or those who do not participate in learning, skills and work activities.

We will use the word “teacher(s)” or “teaching staff” to describe those providing instruction of any kind during education, skills or work activities. This helps ensure that individuals remain unidentifiable.

### **Further information**

Further information and guidance about inspections can be found on the inspectorate's website:

[www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)



## Education, Skills and Work activities

**All prisoners are expected and enabled to engage in education, skills or work activities that increase their employability on release. There are sufficient, suitable education, skills and work places to meet the needs of the population and provision is of a good standard.**

### Inspection areas

Inspectors will evaluate these expectations against the following framework. The framework explains what each inspection area covers and what inspectors need to keep in mind when evaluating each one. The inspection areas are numbered one to three, but they are all equally important.

1. Teaching and Learning	2. Well-being, care, support and guidance	3. Leading and improving
<p>How effectively do the prison's education, skills and work activities support all learners, including those at risk of adverse outcomes for example due to their ALN or as a result of other identified barriers to progress, in terms of:</p> <p><b>1.1</b> The standards of learners' knowledge, understanding and skills</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Learners' attitudes to learning and work</p> <p><b>1.3</b> The quality of learning and work experiences, teaching, training, and assessment</p>	<p>How effectively does the prison support the well-being and personal development of all learners, including those at risk of adverse outcomes for example due to their ALN or as a result of other identified barriers to progress, in terms of:</p> <p><b>2.1</b> The impact on learners' well-being and personal development</p> <p><b>2.2</b> The quality of provision to help learners feel and keep safe, to develop as individuals, and develop skills, attitudes and behaviours that help minimise their risk of reoffending</p>	<p>How effective is leadership and management in terms of:</p> <p><b>3.1</b> Strategic direction and operational management</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Self-evaluation and improvement</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Provision planning and oversight</p> <p><b>3.4</b> Workforce development and professional learning</p>

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	<b>2.3</b> The effectiveness of support, advice and guidance to help learners overcome any disadvantage they may face and plan successfully for their release	
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## **Framework for the inspection of Education, Skills and Work activities in Men's Prisons in Wales**

### **Inspection Area 1: Teaching and Learning**

How effectively the prison's education, skills and work activities support all prisoners, including those at risk of adverse outcomes for example due to their additional learning needs (ALN) or as a result of other identified barrier to progress, in terms of:

- 1.1** The standards of learners' knowledge, understanding and skills
- 1.2** Learners' attitudes to learning and work
- 1.3** The quality of learning and work experiences, teaching, training, and assessment

#### **1.1 The standards of all learners' knowledge, understanding and skills**

*(Note: these bullets are listed broadly in line with a chronological order of learning rather than a hierarchy of importance)*

Inspectors should consider how well prisoners make progress from their starting point in that they:

- recall previous learning
- develop thinking skills
- acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills
- develop practical skills including subject or vocation specific skills and craft
- apply their knowledge, skills and experience to new contexts
- develop creativity, including creative problem solving
- develop their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills
- develop numeracy and digital skills
- develop their employability skills
- develop an awareness of the value of the Welsh language and culture
- in the case of Welsh speakers and learners, maintain or develop their use of Welsh to support their future employment prospects and social interactions
- make good and timely progress from their starting points towards well-defined individual short- and long-term learning goals
- achieve appropriate qualification and accreditation outcomes, and at a suitable pace, level and grade
- progress to and sustain positive destinations in education, training, employment, or self-employment where appropriate within the prison estate or on release

## **1.2 Learners' attitudes to learning and work**

Inspectors should consider the degree to which learners:

- develop confidence and ambition, and are motivated to learn
- engage fully, sustain concentration and show interest in their work
- engage with new experiences and ideas
- develop their communication skills
- listen carefully to their teachers and contribute purposefully to discussions with peers and teachers
- consider respectfully and build constructively upon the views and contributions of others
- stretch and challenge themselves
- persevere when they face difficulties and seek solutions to challenges
- understand their strengths and areas for development and how to improve their work
- learn from their mistakes
- are able to work independently and demonstrate strong team working skills
- use feedback from their teachers and others constructively to further progress their learning
- value and understand the purpose of their learning and other activities and their potential for reducing the risk of reoffending

## **1.3 The quality of learning experiences, teaching and assessment**

Inspectors should consider the extent to which teachers and other practitioners:

- are appropriately qualified, have good subject knowledge and the skills and experience relevant to their roles
- where specialist and vocational knowledge is required, that this reflects best industry practice to meet employers' needs
- plan effectively to meet the requirements of each learning programme and have clear objectives for learning, including in-cell learning
- agree inspiring individual learning goals that consider learners' starting points and challenge them to develop their knowledge and skills to improve their prospects of employment
- have high expectations of all learners and ensure planning, teaching strategies and learning strategies are based on a secure understanding of their starting points and meet their needs, including those with ALN and others at risk of adverse outcomes
- give clear instructions and explanations
- use a range of approaches and resources to motivate, engage and stimulate learners
- use questioning to gauge learners' understanding and develop their thinking and responses

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- help learners develop and apply their knowledge and skills meaningfully in context, including their literacy, numeracy, digital and other transferable employability skills
- support learners to develop their reading skills from their starting points
- provide verbal and written feedback to help learners to know how well they are doing and to improve
- ensure that assessments are valid, timely, accurate and reliable
- track and keep records on the progress of each learner and report on these clearly
- respond to the outcomes of assessment appropriately, for example by adjusting teaching, learning goals or providing appropriate support
- ensure that learners regularly review their own learning, understand their progress, and are involved in setting their own learning targets, including the use of person-centred approaches for learners with ALN
- work effectively with technical, learning, other support staff and peer mentors to provide learners with individual guidance and help to support their progress
- challenge stereotypes in learners' attitudes, choices and expectations

### **Inspection area 2: Well-being, care, support and guidance**

How effectively the prison supports the well-being of all learners, including those at risk of adverse outcomes for example due to their ALN or as a result of other identified barrier to progress, in terms of:

- 2.1** The impact on learners' well-being and personal development.
- 2.2** The quality of provision to help learners feel and keep safe, to develop as individuals, and develop skills, attitudes and behaviours that help minimise their risk of reoffending.
- 2.3** The effectiveness of support, advice and guidance to help learners to overcome any disadvantage they may face and plan successfully for their release

#### **2.1 The impact on learners' well-being and personal development.**

Inspectors should consider the degree to which learners:

- feel safe, secure and free from abuse during their education, skills and work activities.
- attend regularly and arrive punctually to their education, skills and work activities
- are supported through education, skills and work activities to improve their well-being
- conduct themselves responsibly in all forums and are respectful, considerate and supportive of their peers, teachers, and others
- develop the self-awareness and skills to support desistance from offending behaviour
- recognise and respond appropriately to damaging or unhealthy behaviours
- develop the understanding and skills to participate constructively to the prison community and wider society as ethical, informed citizens, such as,
  - respecting and valuing equality, diversity and inclusion

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- making healthy lifestyle choices
- building healthy relationships
- develop their independent living skills where appropriate
- participate constructively and take on leadership roles and responsibilities, particularly those learners from minority groups or otherwise at risk of adverse outcomes
- feel that the prison's education, skills and work staff listen and responds to their views and ideas

### **2.2 The quality of provision to help learners feel and keep safe, to develop as individuals, and develop skills, attitudes and behaviours that help minimise their risk of reoffending**

Inspectors should consider how effectively the prison's education, skills and work provision:

- promotes safe practices and a culture of safety and inclusion within education, skills and workplaces
- supports and encourages learners to develop positive behaviours and attitudes to learning and work activities
- addresses poor behaviour and attitudes appropriately
- develops learners' knowledge and understanding of the impact of emotionally damaging or unsafe behaviours, for example grooming, sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, harassment and extremism, and addresses these behaviours appropriately when they occur, including complying appropriately with the Prevent duty
- helps learners to develop the behaviours to participate constructively to the prison community, wider society and help minimise their risk of reoffending
- challenges stereotypes in attitudes, choices and expectations, and supports learners to value and respect equality, diversity and inclusion
- ensure learners are kept safe from the dangers of radicalisation
- promotes healthy lifestyle choices including with regard to physical activity, healthy eating and drinking, forming and sustaining healthy relationships, substance misuse, online safety and mental health
- responds to safeguarding issues

### **2.3 The effectiveness of support, advice and guidance to help learners to overcome any disadvantage they may face and plan successfully for their release**

Inspectors should consider how well the prison:

- uses valid, accurate and reliable initial and ongoing assessments of learners' needs, including screening for additional learning needs, as well as their prior experience and attainment to provide a baseline and inform their education, skills or work activities
- provides accessible and impartial guidance and advice about the full range of education, skills and work activities available to them in prison
- help learners make informed decisions in planning their learning, training and work activities while in prison so that they can improve their progression and resettlement planning
- ensures personal learning plans record accurately the outcomes of assessments and any identified additional learning needs by type
- ensures learning plans contain challenging but realistic short and longer-term goals taking good account of learners' sentence plans, needs and interests
- reviews learning plans meaningfully, making adjustments where necessary, and that they provide an up-to-date record of learning and development activities
- ensures that learners' qualifications and employment-related skills are recognised and recorded effectively
- ensures personal learning plans and records of achievement are transferred and accessible following a prison transfer
- provides support for learners' physical, mental health, emotional and social needs so that they can enjoy their learning and benefit from the opportunities that it offers
- makes provision for and delivers responsive support to all learners at risk of adverse outcomes, such as those with disabilities or ALN, or other identified barriers to progress, including personal, emotional and health challenges
- works in partnerships with other departments, organisations, employers or services to provide effective support for learners, including securing the services of specialist agencies where appropriate to secure strong outcomes in prison and on release
- tracks and monitors indicators of learners' progress and well-being, such as attendance, engagement and behaviour, including of groups at risk of adverse outcomes
- identifies relevant issues and responds appropriately to the outcome of tracking and monitoring, for example via intervention strategies
- supports more able and talented (MAT) learners to achieve their potential both within and beyond their formal programmes of learning
- helps learners, including those from vulnerable and minority groups, to take on responsibilities and play a part in the wider prison community

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- provides prisoners with impartial advice and guidance, either directly or via external agencies, about their future education, training and career options and the world of work in preparation for release, including in Welsh where required
- guides and supports prisoners as they prepare to transition to the next phase of learning, employment, self-employment and independent living where relevant, including through access to coaching and modern means of education, training and job search and application via the internet

### **Inspection area 3: Leading and improving**

How effective leadership and management is in terms of:

- 3.1** Strategic direction and operational management
- 3.2** Self-evaluation and improvement
- 3.3** Provision planning and oversight
- 3.4** Workforce development and professional learning

Inspectors should consider the aspects below in light of the difference they make to all learners' progress, well-being and development

#### **3.1 Strategic direction and operational management**

Inspectors should consider how effectively leaders:

- have established and communicated a clear vision and aims for education, skills and work that focus on meeting learners' needs, reducing re-offending and facilitating learners' re-integration back into society
- ensure that strategic objectives, plans and policies support their vision and aims for education, skills and work
- work collaboratively to drive forward strategic development priorities and improvement, including with other prison departments
- develop an effective, engaged team of staff
- model and promote professional values and behaviours that contribute positively to the prison's education, skills and activities provision
- ensure that they and staff at all levels understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities effectively
- promote the benefits to prisoners of participating in education, skills and activities and secure high levels of participation
- ensure that arrangements are in place to allocate learners to activities promptly, and support them to attend regularly and arrive at sessions on time
- set high expectations for staff, learners and themselves
- ensure the progress of all learners, including those at particular risk of adverse outcomes, leading to strong outcomes and positive progression,



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- reduce the impact of barriers to learner well-being, attainment and progression
- supports the development of learners' basic and employability skills, including their reading skills
- balance immediate, short-term needs with the long-term employment and resettlement needs of learners, the local community and Wales
- prevent problems from occurring or quickly implement remedial actions when problems do occur
- ensure that spending decisions and wider financial planning link to strategic priorities and improvement planning
- monitor and manage robustly the performance of delivery partners and sub-contractors relating to learning, teaching, training, well-being, support and guidance and leadership
- ensure the quality and level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned provision effectively.
- ensure that appropriate accommodation and facilities, including digital infrastructures, are available and used safely, effectively and efficiently to support teaching, learning, assessment and well-being
- ensure that additional funding received for specific purposes, such as to support learners with specific needs including disability or ALN, is used effectively and as intended
- promote the use of the Welsh language, the development of prisoners' Welsh language skills and meet the advice and guidance needs of prisoners whose first language is Welsh

And how well the prison's senior leadership:

- actively support the vision and aims for education, skills and work in wider prison policies, procedures, regime and training
- influence and understand education, skills and work provision's strategic direction and how this supports the wider prison's vision
- promote participation in education, skills and work activities
- know the education, skills and work provision's strengths and areas for improvement
- support and challenge leaders as they work to improve the prison's curriculum, activities offer and maintain high standards
- ensure that pay rates and rewards incentivise prisoners to participate and make progress in education and training activities

### **3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement**

Inspectors should consider how well leaders and managers:

- gather and analyse first-hand evidence to inform evaluation of the education, skills and work provision, including the views of learners
- have developed methods to analyse the impact of provision on learners' outcomes, including that of specific groups, and on reducing reoffending behaviours
- know the prison's strengths and areas for improvement across education, skills and work activities
- monitor prison leavers' progression and destinations into education, employment and training and use this data to evaluate impact and in provision planning
- collaborate with appropriate partners and stakeholders, as well as with learners themselves, to evaluate and secure improvements
- ensure that identified priorities for improvement link to the outcomes of self-assessment
- define relevant and measurable actions for improvement with suitable timescales and allocate responsibility for their delivery
- ensure that improvement priorities are supported by the suitable allocation of resources
- have a strong track-record in making improvements that have a positive impact on learners' well-being, learning, outcomes and progression
- secure improvements based on the recommendations related to education skills or work activities from previous inspections
- collaborate with other providers and partners to achieve improvements in the education system locally, regionally and nationally to build its capacity for improvement and improve learners' reintegration into society
- work to meet national, regional and local priorities for education in prisons

### **3.3 Provision planning and oversight**

Inspectors should consider how effectively leaders and managers ensure that provision:

- is sufficient and caters for the full prison population
- takes good account of local and national labour market information, the views, needs and interests of prisoners and is appropriately responsive and agile
- is sufficiently varied and diverse to support prisoners' vocational, academic and personal development needs, providing a coherent offer with clear progression routes, including to education, training, or employment on release
- leads to suitable accreditation where this is appropriate
- is organised to ensure that learners are kept fully occupied and engaged in their activities with minimum interruption

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- is reviewed and planned strategically, in collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders, such as education providers, employers and services
- caters for specific groups e.g. those with advanced knowledge and skills, and those whose starting points are behind their peers, learners with ALN, or who are EAL/ESOL
- improves learners' literacy, numeracy and digital skills, including by meaningful integration into vocational, academic or wider experiences
- provides for prisoners to develop their reading skills as part of an appropriate reading strategy
- caters for learners with complex needs so that they develop independence, decision making and communication skills to help them prepare for their next placement or release
- supports and develops the safe and secure use of digital technology and digital content, including the internet, in teaching and learning activities
- includes work-related experience to develop vocational and employability skills, including through appropriate use of release on temporary licence "ROTL"
- supports prisoners, especially Welsh speakers and Welsh language learners, to use and develop their Welsh language skills
- includes learning activities that promote and reflect the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of Wales

### **3.4 Workforce development and professional learning**

Inspectors should consider how effectively leaders and managers:

- have established a culture and ethos of supporting professional learning for all staff
- ensure that staff have and maintain skills and expertise relevant to their roles, including specialist knowledge where required, to enable them to deliver their programmes and meet learners' and employers' needs effectively
- manage staff performance to help them improve their practice, especially to support improvement priorities arising from self-evaluation
- identify and facilitate the sharing of good practice, both internally and within the wider sector, with staff and other providers
- address issues of underperformance in a robust but supportive way
- ensure that all staff participate in valuable professional learning and performance management activities
- evaluate the impact of professional learning on learners' progress and well-being
- encourage and support staff to work with other organisations to improve their practice and update their vocational skills and technical knowledge
- consider and support the well-being and safety? of staff, including workload considerations and the extent to which leaders consider the impact of any new or revised work requirements

## Appendix

### Learners at risk of adverse outcomes

As far as it practicable, across the inspection areas, inspectors should consider the provision for and impact on groups of learners, such as for example but not exclusively those:

- from different ethnic minority backgrounds
- who have English as an additional language in the context of English medium provision,
- are first language Welsh speakers
- with different types of additional learning need (ALN)
- who, relative to others, need to improve their literacy, numeracy or digital skills, particularly emergent or non-readers
- with disabilities
- with medical needs, including those with mental health needs
- who have experienced care
- who were previously educated otherwise than at school
- who are migrant workers, refugees or asylum seekers
- with low attendance and engagement
- who are more able and talented
- other groups of learners, who are at risk of adverse outcomes because of a protected characteristic or an identified barrier to learning or progress not mentioned above, such as type of offence, age or sexual orientation