Guidance for Inspectors

What we inspect (2024-2030) : adult learning in the community

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Introduction to 'What we inspect'

This handbook sets out what inspectors need to consider when evaluating the three inspection areas in adult learning in the community partnerships. It explains 'What we inspect'. The guidance is essential reading for reporting inspectors and all other members of the inspection team, including the nominee. It may also be useful for providers to support their understanding of the inspection guidance. There is a separate handbook that explains the inspection process and methodology, 'How we inspect in adult learning in the community partnerships'.

The three inspection areas are set out below:

IA1   Teaching and learning

IA2   Well-being, care, support and guidance

IA3   Leading and improving

There is further information about inspections on our website www.estyn.gov.wales

Evaluating each inspection area (IA)

Inspection teams will not give overall grades for each inspection area. However, they will make a robust and thorough evaluation of the partnership's provision and its impact on learning and well-being. 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 in each partnership. 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 short 'spotlight on…' within the report (a short paragraph). We will showcase a range of these spotlights on our website. Where inspectors identify serious shortcomings in one or more inspection areas, the partnership will normally require follow-up activity. There is further guidance about follow-up activity in 'How we inspect'.

The inspection report

Following an inspection, each further education college will receive a report. The reports will be published on the Estyn website. Publication dates can be found on the website. The following outlines what is included in each section of the report.

About the partnership

This section of the report will be brief and contain only factual background information about the partnership and will not contain any evaluation of the provision. The reporting inspector normally agrees the content of this section with the nominee of the partnership during the inspection and during the factual check of the draft report prior to publication. Data presented will be the most recent verified and published national data, with the sources acknowledged in footnotes, where possible. If there is disagreement about the content of this section, the reporting inspector will

make the final decision about what to include in the report. This section will contain brief information on:

- Local authorities involved with the provider and key delivery partners (as a map)
- Any significant changes since the last inspection
- Number of learners at time of inspection [information from provider]. Number of learners in the previous full academic year [information from LLWR]
- Details of the partnership's programmes, in terms of Welsh Government funded courses (ESOL and basic skills) and range of other (leisure/cost-recovery) courses

About the learners on the partnership's courses

- Age profile
- Proportion of learners from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Proportion of learners who speak Welsh at home or identify as Welsh speakers
- Percentage of learners living in socio-economically disadvantaged contexts (top two quintiles in the WIMD – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation)

About the population of the partnerships area

- Age profile
- Proportion of population from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Proportion of population who speak Welsh at home or identify as Welsh speakers
- Percentage of population living in socio-economically disadvantaged contexts (top two quintiles in the WIMD – Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- The qualification levels of adults in the partnership area

Range of provision included in the inspection

Inspections of adult learning in the community partnerships evaluate all Welsh Government funded core provision for adult basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital literacy) as well as all education provision for speakers of other languages (ESOL) covered across the geographical area of the partnerships, in the full range of settings and venues. Inspections will also sample Welsh Government funded courses for personal interest and well-being, and full cost recovery provision arranged by the partnership.

Summary

This section provides a summary overview of the main findings in the report

Recommendations

Recommendations should come directly from the content of the report, identify what needs to improve and be written in priority order.

What happens next

The 'What happens next' section will set out what the provider needs to do following the inspection. In all cases, leaders will need to respond to the recommendations by putting in place the actions needed to make the improvements identified by the inspection team.

This section will explain if the provision requires follow-up. The reasons for the level of follow up should be clear in the main body of the report

Additional information

This section will include a statement on the following item:

Safeguarding arrangements

Statement to indicate whether the provider's arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults give no cause for concern, or whether there are causes for concern

Evidence base of the report

Inspectors use a wide range of evidence to make sure that their findings are valid, accurate and reliable. This section of the report will explain the sources of evidence that they used as well as the range of activities that they carried out during their visit.

Inspection areas

The following section explains what each inspection area covers and what inspectors need to keep in mind when evaluating each one. The inspection areas are numbered 1 – 3, but they are all equally important.

IA1 –Teaching and learning	IA 2 – Well-being, care, support and guidance	IA3 – Leading and improving
Focus How effectively the partnership supports the learning of all learners **1.1** The standards of learners' knowledge, understanding and skills, including their Welsh language skills **1.2** Learners' attitudes to learning **1.3** The quality of learning experiences, teaching and assessment	**Focus** How effectively the partnership supports the well-being of all learners **2.1** The impact on learners' well-being and personal development **2.2** The effectiveness of learner support, advice and guidance to help learners develop as individuals and overcome any disadvantage they may face **2.3** The effectiveness of safeguarding practices and the safeguarding culture	**Focus** How effective is leadership and management **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

There is a series of supplementary guidance documents available on our website. These provide further information about our approaches to inspecting various aspects of this framework.

Framework for the inspection of adult learning in the community partnerships

Across the inspection areas, inspectors should consider the impact on all learners, including those at risk of adverse outcomes, for example learners affected by poverty, with ALN or other identified barrier to progress.

Inspection Area 1 –Teaching and learning

How effectively the partnership supports the learning of all learners

1.1 The standards of learners' knowledge, understanding and skills, including their Welsh language skills

1.2 Learners' attitudes to learning

1.3 The quality of learning experiences, teaching and assessment

1.1 The standards of learners' knowledge, understanding and skills, including their Welsh language skills.

(Note : these bullets are in more of a chronological order of learning rather than a hierarchy of importance)

Inspectors should consider how well learners:

- recall previous learning
- develop thinking skills
- acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills
- develop appropriate practical subject, craft or vocational skills
- apply their knowledge, skills and experience to new contexts
- demonstrate creativity, including creative problem solving
- develop their oracy (listening/speaking) and literacy skills (reading/writing)
- develop their understanding and use of Welsh, whatever their starting points, to support their future careers and social interaction
- develop numeracy and digital skills
- make progress from their starting points
- achieve strong qualification outcomes at a suitable level and grade where relevant
- show long term progress towards their personal learning goals and to positive destinations in education, training, employment or independent living
- develop and using their Welsh language skills in the context of their courses and for use in their communities and daily lives

1.2 Learners' attitudes to learning

Inspectors should consider the degree to which learners:

- engage fully in learning
- enjoy learning, sustain concentration, and show interest in their work

- Listen carefully to tutors and peers, contributing constructively to discussions and group work, both in-person and online
- engage positively in tasks and persevere through difficulties
- develop confidence and are motivated to learn
- develop confidence, motivation, and an understanding of their strengths and areas for development and know what to do to improve
- work independently, undertake additional research, and use feedback to enhance learning
- are proactive in seeking help and catching up on missed work
- show respect for others' contributions and maintain proper online etiquette.
- engage with new experiences and ideas
- understand how learning helps them develop as confident individuals and valued society members, contributing to employment, communities, or supporting parenting/caring responsibilities

1.3 The quality of learning experiences, teaching and assessment

When evaluating teaching, inspectors should note that there is no preferred methodology or fixed template, and tutors may use a range of different approaches. The key consideration is whether the teaching engages learners and develops their knowledge and skills.

They should consider how well tutors and practitioners:

- understand and apply adult pedagogies and classroom management techniques
- plan and structure teaching effectively, taking into account individual goals, past experiences, social barriers, additional learning needs, and aspirations of adult learners
- show flexibility in planning and teaching, stretching learners but allowing them to progress at a suitable own pace, taking into account learners' interests and ideas
- provide appropriate support for learners with additional learning needs
- assess learners' progress regularly, and give feedback which allows learners to develop
- help learners to reflect on their own progress, know their strengths and areas for improvement, and what they need to do to improve
- guide learners to appropriate next steps in their learning and progression
- plan and teach to meet different levels of learning within one class
- use questioning to help learners progress
- ensure the pace of the session is in line with learners' understanding, needs and aspirations
- use resources and materials to stimulate interest, broaden knowledge, and develop skills.
- ensure learning is engaging, positive and inclusive
- encourage learners' to engage in sessions, support their peers, contribute to discussions and learn to their full potential
- deliver bilingually where appropriate
- develop awareness of the benefits of bilingual learning and encourage Welsh speakers to support their peers' language skills
- ensure resources provide key terminology in both Welsh and English and include

examples from Welsh culture and context where appropriate.
- signpost learners to community partnerships or organisations for further Welsh language development and learning opportunities Across the inspection area,

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

How effectively the partnership supports the well-being of all learners

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

2.2 The effectiveness of learner support, advice and guidance to help learners develop as individuals and overcome any disadvantage they may face

2.3 The effectiveness of safeguarding practices and the safeguarding culture

2.1 The impact on learners' well-being and personal development taking into account the type of provision in which they take part

Inspectors will evaluate how participation in Welsh Government-funded courses, including those designed for re-engagement with education, personal interest, and core provision in literacy, numeracy and digital skills supports learners' wellbeing and personal development. Inspectors will also consider how courses which are not funded by the Welsh Government, or clubs supported by partnership, contribute to participants' well-being and the partnership's offer.

Overall, across the different types of provision inspectors should consider the extent to which learners:

- feel safe, secure and free from abuse
- feel treated fairly and with respect
- feel that their provider listens and respond to them effectively
- attend their planned learning activities and manage commitments effectively
- develop as confident individuals who can lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society
- demonstrate self-awareness
- take on leadership roles and responsibilities where appropriate
- develop as ethical, informed citizens who respect and value diversity
- recognise and value healthy relationships and respond appropriately to unhealthy behaviours
- are considerate and supportive of their peers, their tutors, and others
- conduct themselves responsibly and respectfully in different contexts, including online
- are ambitious and confident and demonstrate resilience in life and learning
- are ambitious and confident

2.2 The effectiveness of learner support, advice and guidance to help learners develop as individuals and overcome any disadvantage they may face

Inspectors should consider how well the partnership:

- provides support for learners' physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being,

ensuring they enjoy and benefit from their learning
- supports learners' attendance and tracks their progress, well-being, engagement, and behaviour
- identifies and responds to concerns through interventions such as tutoring, mentoring, coaching, or counselling
- collaborates with other organisations and specialist agencies to provide effective support for learners
- provides responsive support for vulnerable learners and those with additional learning needs (ALN) based on their individual abilities, needs and barriers.
- supports learners with behavioural or engagement issues to develop appropriate behaviours and attitudes to learning
- helps learners to understand the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion, harassment, discrimination, extremism, and the importance of tolerance and respect.
- challenges stereotypes and promotes understanding of healthy relationships
- Fosters learners' understanding of their culture, community, Wales, and the wider world, encouraging participation in the community
- promotes healthy lifestyle choices, including diet, substance misuse, online safety, mental health, and managing workload
- provides, either directly or through external agencies, impartial advice and guidance on education, training pathways, career options and other opportunities; and transitions to further education, employment, or independent living

2.3 The effectiveness of safeguarding practices and the safeguarding culture

Inspectors should consider how effectively the providers' safeguarding arrangements:

- promote safe practices and a culture of safety
- ensure that all learners are protected on-site, off-site and online
- identify learners aged under 18 and vulnerable adults in need or at risk of significant harm.
- ensure safe and robust recruitment practices
- check and record the suitability of staff and others who are in contact with learners and maintain a record of these checks
- facilitate appropriate safeguarding referrals
- comply with Welsh Government statutory requirements and guidance
- prevent and address discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment
- develop learners' knowledge and understanding of emotionally damaging or unsafe behaviours, for example grooming, sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and extremism
- ensure learners are kept safe from the dangers of radicalisation
- ensure all staff across providers know how to respond to safeguarding issues
- share information and intelligence about safeguarding concerns across the partnership appropriately
- ensure relevant safeguarding training for staff
- involve senior leaders across the partnership to oversee and quality assure safeguarding practices

Inspectors should ensure that:

- arrangements for safeguarding learners meet requirements and give no cause for concern
- where arrangements are a serious cause for concern, inspectors include a recommendation in the report and that Estyn send a well-being letter to the partnership asking them to outline how they will address the shortcoming(s).

Inspection Area 3 – Leading and improving

How effective is leadership and management 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 learners' progress, well-being and development.

3.1 Strategic direction and operational management

Inspectors should consider how effectively leaders:

- plan strategically to ensure that the partnership responds to Welsh Government, national, regional and local priorities
- have communicated a clear vision and partnership ethos with appropriate aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that focus on meeting learner needs and outcomes
- ensure that all partners contribute to the partnership and work collaboratively to meet the needs of their learners and communities, reduce the impact of poverty on attainment and drive forward strategic priorities and improvement
- operate a collaborative and accountable partnership where all partners contribute, drive strategic priorities and improvements, and share positive practices, policies, procedures and protocols
- collaborate with other educational providers and agencies in the sector to achieve local, regional, and national improvements and build capacity for continuous improvement
- develop and maintain an effective, engaged staff team that sets and meets high expectations for themselves and learners, and models professional values and behaviours
- ensure the quality and level of staffing and learning resources to deliver the planned provision effectively
- identify risks to the partnership and take timely actions to mitigate them
- manage resources to balance immediate and long-term needs, ensuring that spending decisions and financial planning align with strategic priorities and support high-quality teaching, learning, and well-being.
- ensure that appropriate accommodation and facilities are available and used

effectively and efficiently

- ensure that additional funding received for specific purposes is used effectively and as intended
- promote the use of the Welsh language and the development of Welsh language skills
- plan how to use new and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to improve the partnership's work

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 partnership's work, and know the partnership's strengths and areas for improvement
- use governance structures to oversee the work of the partnership, and hold senior leaders to account
- ensure that priorities for improvement link to the outcomes of self-evaluation, define relevant and measurable actions with suitable timescales and allocated responsibilities, and support these priorities with the necessary resources
- make improvements that have a positive impact on learners' outcomes, well-being, and progression, sustain high quality and aspects of provision in need of improving
- address recommendations from previous Estyn inspections

3.3 Provision planning and oversight

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

- responds appropriately to local, regional and national priorities
- is reviewed and planned collaboratively with partners to ensure a rich and coherent offer that meets the needs of its communities
- is delivered at suitable locations and times, and that remote learning opportunities are available where appropriate
- is marketed effectively and accessibly to its target audience
- offers opportunities for learners to progress within and beyond the partnership
- promotes and supports the development of Welsh language skills and the use of Welsh
- embraces the community, cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of Wales

3.4 Workforce development and professional learning

Inspectors should consider how effectively leaders and managers:

- consider staff workload and well-being, and to what extent any new or revised arrangements impact on the workload of their staff
- support staff to reflect on their values, knowledge, and skills, maintain and update their subject and teaching expertise, and continually develop their literacy, numeracy, digital and other professional skills
- manage staff performance to help them improve their practice and address

issues of performance in a robust and supportive way
- establish a culture and ethos of professional learning for all staff across the partnership, ensuring that staff participate in valuable professional learning and the sharing of good practice
- encourage and support staff to work with other organisations within and outside the partnership to improve their practice and increase their professional knowledge, understanding and skills
- evaluate the impact of professional learning on staff effectiveness, learners' progress and well-being