

**Arrangements and guidance
for**

**Inspection of
Quality Improvement Planning**

in

**Further Education, Work-based Learning and
European Social Fund projects**

September 2018

ETI: Promoting Improvement in the Interest of all Learners



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments

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1. Introduction

This document sets out how the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will carry out the quality improvement planning inspection. The ETI arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement planning in further education, work-based learning and European Social Fund (ESF) projects can be found on the ETI website at: https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/quality-improvement-scrutiny-inspection-guidance-sept-17_0.pdf.

The key reasons for the decision to carry out a quality improvement planning inspection in an organisation typically include:

1. the organisation's previous inspection indicated a high level of capacity for sustained improvement, or the capacity to identify and bring about improvement, and it has not had a substantive¹ inspection activity within approximately the past three years;
2. the scrutiny of the quality improvement plan (QIP) and associated documentation² identifies that the organisation is not submitting sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they are planning effectively to sustain improvement;
3. the organisation has evaluated itself with an overall effectiveness outcome of having to address important areas for improvement or address urgently significant areas for improvement;
4. the statement of assurance governance letter identifies only 'partial assurance' for the organisation's quality improvement planning processes; or
5. a request from the Department for the Economy (Department) or an evidence-based risk is identified by the District Inspector.

The inspection will usually be conducted by the District Inspector as Reporting Inspector and will take place over two days; an Associate Assessor (AA) will typically be deployed.

2. Focus of the quality improvement inspection

The focus of the inspection will be to **evaluate the impact** of the organisation's quality improvement planning processes in two key areas for improvement³, prioritised by the organisation and agreed with the Reporting Inspector. The most recent QIP will be the key document in agreeing the areas of focus, which may include an area for improvement from a recent inspection, or inspection activity such as a district or survey visit. The focus of the inspection will determine the nature and scope of the pre-inspection information and data requirements.

When it is not possible to agree an area of focus with the organisation, the focus will become the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management generally, and action to promote improvement particularly.

¹ An inspection activity which involved a published report about the organisation.

² This decision would be made after the scrutiny of any re-submitted evidence, as requested by the Department for the Economy

³ The areas agreed should be substantive enough to enable the organisation to demonstrate with first-hand evidence that it can effect and sustain improvement through its quality improvement planning and underpinning self-evaluation processes.

It is critical that the areas selected are substantive enough to enable the inspection team to evaluate adequately the organisation's capacity to identify and bring about improvement; the outcome of this inspection will be deemed to be largely representative of the organisation as a whole. It is the organisation's capacity for self-evaluation leading to improvement which ETI will inspect and report upon primarily.

The organisation's arrangements for safeguarding will be evaluated and reported on as part of the inspection and the organisation should complete the most recent ETI safeguarding proforma to inform this aspect of the inspection. The proforma can be found at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/safeguarding-proforma-further-education-and-work-based-learning>.

3. How will a quality improvement inspection work?

Notification:

Prior to the inspection date, the organisation will receive a notification letter and telephone call from the Inspection Services Team. After this, the Reporting Inspector will contact the organisation by telephone to inform them of the inspection and plan the visit. This will include details on the timing of the inspection, those involved, information on any documentation and data the team will need access to and the arrangements for reporting back the findings. Discussion will also take place around the selection of the key areas for improvement which will be focused upon. It is unlikely that the organisation will need to prepare any documentation in advance of the inspection. After making contact with the organisation, the Reporting Inspector will forward an email which will confirm the detail around the inspection.

The inspection:

Inspection activities will include:

- a short overview briefing on the morning of the first day from a senior manager⁴ on work ongoing around the areas of focus; this should also include some evaluative detail around how successfully the organisation has addressed any areas for improvement from the most recent inspection activity;
- meetings with relevant senior and middle leaders to discuss and review the effectiveness of self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes with regard to the areas of focus;
- a sample of session observations and workplace visits⁵ as suggested by the organisation, relevant to first-hand evidence-gathering in relation to the areas of focus and access to the learners' work;
- discussions with the learners and staff around safeguarding arrangements and their experiences in the organisation;
- an overview of the organisation's analysis of the most recent data on the outcomes attained by the learners;

⁴ This could be the director, owner, senior leader

⁵ This may also involve telephone contact with some employers

- scrutiny of other relevant documentation provided by the organisation, time permitting⁶; and
- short oral feedback to a small group of senior managers and a representative from the governing body/management committee at the end of the second day⁷; this will include feedback on the areas of focus and an evaluation as to whether the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to identify and bring about improvements, or not.

The responsibility lies with the organisation to ensure that ETI are directed to, or provided with, the most pertinent sources of evidence for the areas of focus. The Reporting Inspector will plan the inspection days, in conjunction with the organisation, to ensure there is relevant and adequate evidence to evaluate the areas of focus. This can be reviewed and adjusted as the inspection proceeds, particularly between day one and day two.

Safeguarding:

In addition to the areas of focus identified for the inspection, the organisation's arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at risk will be evaluated and reported on as part of the inspection. The organisation should complete the most recent ETI safeguarding proforma to inform this aspect of the inspection. This should be signed and dated by the leader of the organisation and the chair of the governing body or management committee.

The completed proforma will indicate to the Reporting Inspector the extent to which the organisation may be fully or only partially compliant (based on its own self-assessment) in line with the guidance issued by the Department.

Organisations should note that the signed and dated safeguarding proforma will be held by the ETI as formal record of its evaluation of safeguarding at the point of inspection.

The ETI will undertake discussions with learners and staff around the arrangements for safeguarding. Should any serious safeguarding issues arise during the course of the inspection, the areas of focus may change to that of safeguarding. If the ETI evaluate that the organisation did not provide sufficient evidence that the arrangements reflect or broadly reflect the guidance to safeguard learners issued by the Department, there will be a follow-up inspection in around six weeks to ensure the safeguarding issues identified are being dealt with effectively.

Documentation:

There is no requirement for the organisation to create additional documentation for the inspection. The ETI are keen to use existing, working documents. The key documents that ETI will wish to have access to are:

- the quality improvement plan (QIP), associated self-evaluation evidence and action plans (including, for example, at course-team level);
- relevant timetables of ongoing training and learning sessions, including the essential skills and any training in the workplace;

⁶ Given the time constraints, only the most critical, high-level documents should be provided, and which are most relevant for the areas of focus

⁷ A representative from the Department will be invited to the feedback and may attend or connect remotely.

- a copy of the completed safeguarding proforma signed and dated by the organisation leader and chair of the governing body/management committee;
- most recent analysis of outcomes (retention, achievement and progression) attained by the learners, including in the essential skills;
- a sample of personal training plans and access to tracking data and information;
- samples of the learners' work which demonstrate that the actions taken are leading to improvements in the outcomes and standards they attain; and
- any other documents the organisation feels is relevant to the areas of focus (bearing in mind that inspectors will not be able to scrutinise a considerable volume of documents).

4. What happens after a quality improvement inspection?

A few weeks after the inspection visit, a short quality improvement inspection report will be forwarded to the organisation and the Department, and published on the ETI website. The report will contain concise, key findings around the areas of focus and on the arrangements for safeguarding.

The report will also include one of two conclusions:

At the time of the quality improvement inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, the organisation continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity/capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

OR

At the time of the quality improvement inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, the organisation has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision. The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation brings about improvement and the Department may consider further action.

If the organisation does not demonstrate sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of provision, it will be required to submit an improvement plan to the Quality Improvement Team in the Department for the Economy to address the areas for improvement identified, within eight weeks.

The outcome of the quality improvement planning inspection visit will inform the next steps, which could include a full scheduled inspection.

Typical planning outline for a quality improvement inspection

Day 1	Activity
9.00 am	ETI arrival; introductions. Short ETI team briefing/planning meeting
Around 9.30 am	Initial meeting with senior leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short oversight presentation (by senior leader) on areas of focus and update on actions to address findings from previous inspection activity • Completed safeguarding proforma provided to the Reporting Inspector • Queries clarified • Timetables obtained to select and agree observations and workplace visits
10.30 am (onwards)	Reporting Inspector meets with designated staff to discuss safeguarding Lesson/session observations Workplace visits, employer interviews Scrutiny of relevant documentation. Focus group(s) with learners Meetings with staff, senior and middle leaders as required (as per the areas of focus, and safeguarding)
Around 4.00 pm	Brief update meeting with the senior leader.

Day 2	Activity
Morning	Brief meeting with senior leader(s) to confirm arrangements for day/address any issues or concerns arising from previous day. Inspection activities continue.
Afternoon	Short moderation meeting. Report writing.
Around 4.00 pm	Short oral feedback to a small group of senior managers and a representative from the governing body/management committee. A representative from the Department for the Economy will also be invited to attend. (approximately 30 minutes)

Format of published quality improvement inspection report

Introduction

In *month 20XX*, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a quality improvement inspection of *organisation* to evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes.

Focus of the quality improvement inspection

The quality improvement inspection focused on the following key areas identified for improvement:

- *key priority area for improvement 1;and*
- *key priority area for improvement 2.*

The arrangements for safeguarding were also included.

Key findings

The inspection identified the following key findings:

- *a concise paragraph relating to each area under focus.*

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding learners/participants ...

Overall Outcome

At the time of the quality improvement inspection, and in the areas evaluated, *the organisation* continues to demonstrate a high level of capacity/capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision.

The outcome from this inspection will inform the next steps for the organisation with regard to the inspection cycle.

OR

At the time of the quality improvement inspection visit, and in the areas evaluated, the *organisation* has not demonstrated sufficient capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the quality of the provision. The ETI will continue to monitor how the organisation brings about improvement and Department may consider further action.

The outcome from this inspection will inform the next steps for the organisation with regard to the inspection cycle.