

### Introduction

The Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMIC) for Education and Training in Wales plans to change the way they inspect for the next cycle of inspections which begins in September 2010.

Estyn are now in the process of developing a new framework for inspection. The proposed changes have been shaped by in-depth work with key stakeholder groups and an earlier exercise to collect the views of a representative sample of those who use and provide the services Estyn inspects. As part of this work Estyn is now undertaking a formal consultation on the specific set of changes it is proposing to implement.

### Instructions

The proposed changes should be read and considered before completing the consultation questionnaire available here. Details of the proposed changes are available on Estyn's website [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk). Alternatively hard copies are available directly from CRG Research Ltd ([consult@crgresearch.co.uk](mailto:consult@crgresearch.co.uk) / 029 2034 3218).

The consultation questions are presented here. Please feel free to view the questions and return to them at a later date with a considered response. Your views are very important. They will inform and influence the future of education and training inspections.

Please tick one box for each of the following statements to show whether you agree or disagree, and then please explain why you agree or disagree. We also welcome any comments more generally.

Any information you give will be used for the sole purpose of this consultation and will not be passed on to any third-party.

### Further Information

If you have any queries regarding the study please contact:

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## Section 1: Proportionate Inspection

1. There should be a more proportionate approach to inspection based on a core inspection for all providers and follow-up inspection activity for those that under-perform

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members felt strongly about this. 100% of those questioned agreed that a more proportionate approach with follow up inspection activity was a good idea. Members welcomed support being offered for weaker schools.

Members felt it was better to act as a critical friend rather than a threat to schools, which will reduce stress already prevalent in the profession.

The support for struggling schools without recrimination would be welcomed by members. Shorter inspections made more sense.

2. Continued engagement with providers identified as under-performing will help promote progress towards improvement

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members felt that more clarification was needed on how dissemination of good practice amongst schools would occur and how this dissemination would be funded.

## Section 2: A streamlined framework of inspection indicators and grades

3. The proposals for a streamlined framework of inspection are likely to make inspections more efficient and effective

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

75 % of members surveyed welcomed proposals to streamline the framework for inspections and agreed that it would make inspections more effective and efficient.

Members felt that the current format is time consuming and takes teachers away from learning and teaching. It was also felt that a more streamlined framework would help reduce the already heavy paperwork load.

4. The grades of 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Adequate' and 'Poor' are an improvement on the five-point numerical system

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members broadly welcomed this.

5. Learner wellbeing should be a feature of the new inspection framework

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

79% of ATL Cymru members surveyed believed that the well-being of learners should be included. Many members believe that the well-being of learners is a key factor in their ability to learn and retain information and should be central to all teaching and learning. It was commented that some schools already play excellent roles in helping pupils with personal problems which enables them to work more effectively

Although the majority of those surveyed were in favour of this, many members expressed concerns regarding the validity of learner well-being as an inspection feature. Many felt that there needs to be a caveat included when consulting with pupils. Their opinions should be collected and considered in balance with other evidence presented.

6. The new focus on customer satisfaction is a positive step

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

7. The new inspections should have a clear focus on literacy and numeracy

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

8. The new focus on partnership working between inspectors, providers and learners should drive up quality and standards of provision

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

This will be facilitated by the phasing out of the present 'contracted out' teams, in favour of HMI led teams.

### Section 3: Greater emphasis on the user

9. The stronger emphasis on gathering and assessing the views of learners and other stakeholders during inspection will improve the inspection process

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members agreed with this but felt that there needed to be caveats imposed to protect them. There needs to be clarification on the methodology of gathering the views of learners and other stakeholders. It needs to be ensured that the whole process of gathering and assessing the views of learners and stakeholders is not too weighty.

10. Involving learners as members of inspection teams in initial teacher training and adult and community-based learning should offer valuable insights

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members broadly agreed with this proposal but would want more detail on this proposal before committing.

**Section 4: Extension of the use of HMI-led inspection teams with strong ‘peer inspector’ involvement**

11. Inspections of schools should be organised by Estyn and led by HMI, as in other sectors

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

74% of ATL Cymru members surveyed felt that inspections should be organised by Estyn and led by HMI. Members felt that this would offer a form of built in quality control and would be a more consistent approach to take.

It was felt that it is absolutely essential that rigorous HMI leaders protect the integrity of the inspection regime. In the past, HMI has given valuable advice and guidance to schools.

12. HMI-led inspections of schools are likely to increase confidence in the findings

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members feel that HMI inspectors would be more supportive of colleagues and not ‘damn and condemn’ them unnecessarily.

13. The stronger involvement of peer inspectors in all sectors should increase the positive impact of inspections

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members agreed but felt that quality control measures needed to be established.

14. Use of peer inspectors should help to spread expertise in quality evaluation and improvement processes and promote 'cross-fertilisation' and dissemination of ideas and good practice

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

Members agreed with the benefits that peer inspection can bring but stressed the need for money to be invested in it to make it effective.

15. Providers should continue to be invited to select a nominee to work with the inspection team

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

### **Section 5: More emphasis on building capacity for self-evaluation and improvement**

16. Placing more emphasis on building capacity for self-evaluation and improvement among providers should be an important focus for inspection

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

85% of members surveyed agreed that more emphasis on building capacity for self-evaluation and improvement among providers should be an important focus for inspection.

Members felt that they are usually more accurate and informative as schools should know how they are performing. It was felt that self-evaluation can empower schools and encourage greater reflective practice. ATL Cymru believes that guidance will be needed on this to prevent it becoming an over weighty issue.

### **Section 6: Clearer, more accessible reports**

17. Reports should be shorter

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

18. Reports should be clearer

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

19. The proposed streamlined framework covering the 3 key questions on 'outcomes', 'provision' and 'leadership and management' will focus reporting on the most important issues

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

20. Reports should be made more accessible to a wider audience by only focusing on the most important issues

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

### **Section 7: Shorter period of notice**

21. A three-week period of notice is appropriate for individual providers

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment

67% of ATL Cymru members agreed that a three-week period of notice is appropriate for individual providers. Many members commented that Head Teachers often over react at the news of an impending inspection. It was felt that a shorter notice period would take a significant amount of stress and strain out of the inspection process. It would also help ensure schools are prepared at all times. It was felt that shorter inspections would give a truer reflection of a school situation. Under the present system one member commented that in their school they have been preparing for over four months for an inspection and it has got to the stage where staff feel that they are too exhausted to give their best.

Those who disagreed with the proposal felt that it would increase the stress teachers were already under and would possibly lead to many leaving the profession citing stress as the major factor. Some felt the possibility of being able to reduce the notice period for inspections would depend on how much written evidence inspectors would require and what time inspections were scheduled for ( for example, not in periods of examinations).

22. A four-week period of notice is appropriate to prepare for area and partnership inspections

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please Comment