Contents

Introduction:

Many members of the BME Learning Network (West Yorkshire) have identified the need for an accessible source of best practice guidance which will help meet the requirements of funders, external quality reviewers and the expectations of Board members who want to be confident that the learner experience is a positive one.

We hope that this Resource Pack will meet that need.

We would like to thank Capacitybuilders Improving Reach for the funding to produce the pack. We hope to be able to keep it updated and over the coming months, to create on-line learning material to further build the skills of Network members.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to see additional material in the pack.

We hope you will use this resource as your Base Camp!

Patrick Spencer-Salami
Chair - BME Learning Network (West Yorkshire)

Section 1: Getting Started

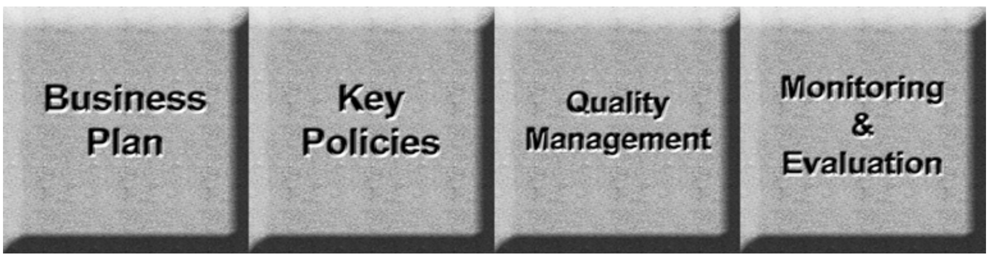
In any organisation, embedding quality starts at the top. This pack is designed to help you make sure that the learning opportunities your organisation provides are high quality and that the experience your learners have at your centre is inspiring and they finish your activities wanting more.

Many Network members run classes that aren't accredited but are put on in direct response to requests from the community they serve.

Others run accredited courses that are funded to help people up the ladder into further or higher education or into work.

Before you start looking for a tutor, a suitable room for the class or drafting a poster for the training you plan to provide, we recommend that your Board, with your Chief Executive or paid/unpaid Co-ordinator, sit down and put the basic building blocks in place for a quality learning experience.

The solid foundation of your quality services are your organisational plan, policies and procedures, management arrangements and your monitoring systems.



Section 2: Firm Foundations

There are a small number of written documents which your organisation must have to create a solid base for your work with learners. Once they have been written and agreed by the Board and your management team, it is important **not** to just leave them on a shelf.

All your staff and volunteers should know about them.

All your learners should know about them and where to find them.

They should be kept under review and checked at least once a year to see if they are still relevant and useful.

They should be monitored and evaluated as well.

So, what are they?

Section 2.1: Your Business Plan

This doesn't have to be a huge or complicated document but it does need some time and thought by your Management team to put it together. Then you need to set down the following:

<u>Your mission</u>: What is your organisation about and what is it hoping to achieve? Your mission should include references to the positive experience you want to give your learners.

<u>Your values</u>: What does your organisation hold dear? How will you go about doing your work? Your values should include a reference to inclusion, access and equality and diversity.

<u>Target market</u>: Who is your target customer base?

<u>Context:</u> It is helpful to include a short description of the area in which

you are operating. This could include a map of the area, a description of the social and economic environment in which your client base lives and any specific challenges faced by your organisation. You might decide to do a SWOT analysis with the management team i.e. to look at your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to help you prioritise the work that needs to be done over the next three years.

Organisational structure: How is the organisation managed? What staff do you have to deliver the plan?
Your organisational structure should include a diagram of the Board, the management team and your staff and volunteers and who is responsible for checking quality and health and safety.

Specific plan: What is your one to three year activity plan - what will you be doing?
Your specific plan should include the courses you are offering, the type of course you want to offer in the future and the target audiences, the funding and any accreditation you have or will need to acquire, any actions you are going to take regarding growth or development and your performance targets.

Review schedule: How will you check how well you are doing against the plan and how often will you check? Your review schedule should include how your targets will be reviewed and who will be responsible for checking.

Milestones: Are there any steps along the way against which you can check progress?

Finances: How will you get the money to achieve your plan? What is your financial forecast for the coming year - cash flow forecast?

Budget: What is your estimated profit for the end of the year? If you employ staff, you should be putting money aside for the bad times e.g. redundancy costs, rent or rates rises, gaps in funding.

Don’t forget to write down your true costs.
For advice on full cost recovery see:
http://www.fullcostrecovery.org.uk/main/index.php?content=home

A sample business plan is provided in Appendix 2.1

Section 2.2: Key Policies

All External Quality Reviewers, Inspectors, Awarding Body Verifiers and most funders will want to see that you have the key policies in place to ensure quality in all your processes. They will also expect you to make the policies accessible for your staff in a manual or in a communal area on your IT system.

Section 2.2.1: Quality Policy

Your Quality Policy should set out your over-arching commitment to assuring the quality of the learner experience, whilst they are learning at your centre. It should show what you will provide to meet the expectations of learners at each stage of their journey from recruitment to progression, how you will support them and obtain their feedback on their learning experience at your centre.

You can find more detailed guidance and advice on how to ensure fair approaches for all learners in each of these stages of the learner journey in Section 3 below. However your Quality Policy should summarise your procedures and intentions to deliver a quality service, to include:

- Advice and Guidance to improve learner choices (see information on what is required to do this affectively in the Matrix Standard: www.matrixstandard.com)
- Curriculum procedures supporting the Learner Journey, such as Induction, Diagnostic Assessment, Learning Plans, Teaching, Learning, On–course Assessment, Malpractice and Progress Reviews
- Learner support throughout the course and additonal learning support where it is needed
- A Learner Involvement Strategy to outline how the learner is supported pastorally and their voice heard in feedback surveys etc.

- Internal verification
- Complaints and Appeals.

The Quality Policy should also summarise what you have in place for monitoring and evaluating your performance in all your processes, i.e. not just for the curriculum processes but also those processes that support the curriculum, e.g. data collection, self assessment, learner surveys etc. The results of your monitoring and evaluation and data recording are collected together to provide evidence for judgements you will make in the Self Assessment Report and used to enable you to identify improvement actions to be included in the Quality Improvement Plan (see Chapter 4 for more details)

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.1 but please note, this is for guidance only and you should customise it to your own centre

Section 2.2.2: Health and Safety Policy

You have a duty under the health and safety legislation to:

i.carry out regular risk assessments to identify what could go wrong and endanger anyone using your building

ii.to take the necessary steps to minimise that risk

iii.to make sure that all your staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to keep themselves and everyone else in the building safe

iv. to make sure your centre users/learners understand the importance of staying safe and reporting any problems to whoever is working with them.

The starting point for all this is your Health and Safety policy. It should include your organisation’s commitment to health and safety. It should identify who will take responsibility for implementing the policy.

That person will need to consult with the Board, staff and volunteers on a regular basis – every three months for example - for ideas on how to improve health and safety. Staff and volunteers should be trained in how to report an accident or near miss and what to do in case of a fire. There should always be someone in the building who has been trained as a fire warden and in first aid. An accident book should be kept in a central place and regular fire alarm tests and fire drills should be done so you can check if your emergency arrangements work.

For your training activities, you will need to think about how you can make sure the learning environment is safe. This might include doing a risk assessment of the journey to the centre, particularly if you are running evening courses. You may want to put support arrangements in place for learners with particular needs such as those with mental health challenges, physical disabilities, learning disabilities or language needs.

The policy should be kept under regular review. It is a good idea to keep a record of any discussions you have with both staff and learners on health and safety so you can demonstrate that the policy is really working in practice.

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.2, together with a checklist you might want to use for your learners. This checklist could also be used if you are arranging work experience placements for any of your learners.

Section 2.2.3: Equality & Diversity Policy

Nearly every funder you apply to will ask if you have an Equality & Diversity policy. You may also be asked if you have separate Race or Disability Discrimination policy. A policy which addresses all six strands of equality and diversity is normally acceptable, rather than having several parallel policies.

The six strands are:

- Gender equality including both men and women, married people and transexuals
- Race equality including colour, ethnic origin and nationality
- Disability equality
- Age and fair treatment
- Sexual orientation equality for gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and heterosexual people
- Religious belief equal treatment including for those with no religious belief.

The policy should cover the systems you have in place to recruit, train and promote staff as well as the arrangements you have to ensure that the diverse needs of your learners are met.

Your action plan will set out what you will do over the next 12 months to make your policy a reality. This may be as simple as making sure your course advertising reaches as many people as possible or that you will have discussions in team meetings on a regular basis about how best to implement the policy.

An important part of checking if the policy is working is to monitor it. This means asking all your staff and volunteers to complete an equality questionnaire. It is also a good idea to monitor your learners as well. We have provided a sample form that you can ask all your learners to complete at the end of **Appendix 2.2.3.**
A simple Excel spreadsheet can hold this information as you may be asked by funders about the profile of your learners. You will also need it for your annual Self Assessment Report (see Chapter 4).

We have provided a simple table you might choose to copy below:

Overall analysis of learners engaged: April 08 – March 09									
M	F	BME	Wh	Disabled	Not Disabled	16 – 18	19 – 25	26 – 49	50+
LGB	Hindu	Muslim	Jewish	Christian	Atheist				

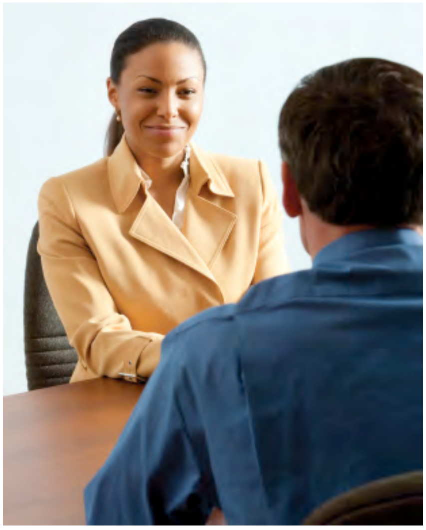
A model policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.3 along with a template for an action plan.

Section 2.2.4: Recruitment, Retention and Training Policy

Your organisation may not have any paid staff at the moment but it is a good idea to put a policy in place just in case you apply for funding to employ someone and you are asked for your policy.

Small organisations often like to invite their friends and contacts to work with them but if the post is externally funded, you will be expected to have evidence that you invited as wide a pool of talent as possible to apply for the post. This will also be consistent with your Equality & Diversity policy. One exception to this rule may be when you need to employ a tutor

Wherever possible, advertise your vacancies openly; an alternative is to build up a bank of tutors that you have interviewed and assessed that you can call on when needed. You need to think about protecting your learners so the policy should include reference to checking anyone you appoint for a criminal record.
Your policy should also include your arrangements for developing your staff both on the job and for future promotion.



For the learners to benefit fully from the learning process it is important to have the appropriately trained staff in place and have a development process in place for existing staff. By 2010, all tutors should have at least achieved a Level 3 PTLLS (Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) qualification. The Network is running subsidised courses if any of your staff need to get the PTLLS qualification.

If tutors are teaching full time (i.e. over 20 hours a week) and don't have a PGCE already, they should contact their local College to study the Certificate or Diploma course.

All staff should receive an induction into the organisational systems and have a mentoring and/or appraisal system in place to monitor professional progress and identify any professional issues e.g. training, time management, planning, resources and personal issues that may impede performance.

Training days, both internal and external, should be provided and staff should be encouraged to join any necessary forums and organisations e.g. IFL, NATECLA that will inform, improve, support and update their skills.

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.4

Section 2.2.5: Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

As part of our commitment to quality in service delivery, we need to make sure that the systems are in place to protect vulnerable young people and adults from abuse from others and sometimes from self harm.

The first steps we need to take are to make sure that our staff are appropriately checked as fit to work with our customers. This means that when you recruit new staff or volunteers you need to make sure they are who they say they are i.e. you check their passports or other forms of identity and you check their qualifications. If they are likely to working alone with vulnerable clients , you should also make sure they have a CRB check (see Recruitment Policy).

You will also need a policy which will set out the arrangements you have put in place if you have any cause for concern about the safety of any of your service users. Perhaps most important of all is to make sure everyone at the Centre knows what they should do if they do have any suspicisions that a client may be at risk. This means organising training for them on an annual basis to keep them up to date with legislative and best practice changes. Your local Social Services Department should be able to help you with this.

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.5

Section 2.2.6: Complaints Policy

You will need a procedure which enables your learners to register a complaint about any aspect of their experience with you. This should be included in your course handbook. They may want to say something positive about their experience too so the sample procedure in this pack is both a Compliments and Complaints procedure.

Any complaint you receive should be dealt with as quickly as possible by someone not directly involved with the learner. The learner may not be satisfied by the response they get so there should be an arrangement in place which allows him or her to appeal against the decision, again, to be considered by a named individual who has not been involved so far. This may be a member of your Board.

In each case, the response should be in writing; you should keep a record and monitor complaints once a year and a report made to your Board.

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.6

Section 2.2.7: Sustainable Development Policy

The Government has made it clear that it wants all publicly funded service providers to take a lead in promoting and delivering sustainable development in their daily work. The four main areas they would like to see activity in include:

- social progress that recognises the needs of everyone
- the effective protection of the environment
- the prudent use of natural resources
- the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Having a Sustainable Development policy is a simple way of demonstrating to funders, your organisation and other stakeholders that you too think this is an important issue and that you take active steps to be environmentally friendly.

The policy should set out the Board and senior management commitment to creating an environment where sustainable development can flourish. There needs to be a plan to reduce the environmental impact of your buildings through better management of waste and energy. This plan will include raising awareness of staff, volunteers and learners about the importance of recycling, using recycled and environmentally friendly products and resources and being economical with lights, computer screens and heating.

Most of the Network members are actively engaged in helping disadvantaged communities progress and to supporting people into education and employment. This is well worth including in your policy.

Ofsted has identified an expectation that we should all be working to raise awareness amongst our learners about environmental issues and wherever possible building the topic of global citizenship into our teaching and learning.

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.7

Section 2.2.8: Business Contingency Policy

Some funders may ask you if you have business contingency arrangements. Thinking through what you would do in a disaster situation makes good business sense. This might be a local crisis like a fire or burglary or something that affects everyone in the area like a flood or civil unrest. The arrangements you put in place may include:

- security of key documents eg cheque books and legal documents
- security of information, in particular proof that contract requirements have been met and learner data is secure; a regular computer back-up facility away from your building may be enough

- alternative temporary premises so that you can continue working and supporting your learners.

A sample policy is provided in Appendix 2.2.8

Section 2.3: Centre Quality Manager

If you are delivering learning, your Board will need to identify one person who will take overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of the learner experience. This is quite a time consuming job, particularly if you are offering any accredited courses as it is the Quality Manager that the External Reviewer will want to work with.

So, what does the Quality Manager do?

The Quality Manager takes strategic responsibility for the quality of learning, support and improvement activities across the organisation.

They will produce :

- the Centre's Quality Policy (see Appendix 2.2.1)
- a Quality Manual for the staff to refer to, produced with the Internal Moderator and other staff.

The Quality Manual should include:

- a calendar of your quality assurance activities in the year (see the example in Appendix 2.3.1)
- your centre's policies (see Section 2 and related Appendices)
- all the procedures the centre uses to quality assure the activities that the learners experience on their learning journey (see Section 3.1 to 3.9)
- your monitoring and evaluation arrangements, including reviewing your Business Plan, Marketing plan and your financial, human and resource management arrangements (see Section 2.4 below)
- the responsibilities of relevant managers and staff in the requirements for quality.

We have included three good practice examples, from a small training provider, of how they help their staff understand to their arrangements for Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement in Appendices 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3

The Quality manager will also :

i. work with all the relevant staff to plan the courses on offer - no course should be planned or held without the involvement of the Quality Manager

ii.decide which, if any, accredited bodies the Centre will work with and make sure all the systems and standards are in place to meet their requirements

iii. liaise with Local Authority/Ofsted inspectors /Awarding body verifiers or moderators as and when they want to check on quality

iv. make sure all the key staff in the organisation are communicating effectively so that learning runs smoothly. This could include: tutors, internal moderators, community development staff who may help with learner recruitment, administrative staff and caretaking staff

v. organise relevant training for all key stakeholders in the organisation so that they understand what a quality learning experience looks like and what they can contribute to make it happen (see Section 3 for more details on this)

vi. oversee all the organisational procedures involved in the learner journey (see Section 3), organise regular monitoring and evaluation checks to ensure that they are working well and supporting the learner (see Section 2.4) and review the data management and recording systems

vi. prepare the Self Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and make sure all the actions in the QIP are carried out (see Section 4 for more details on this).

In small organisations, the Centre Quality Manager may also take on the role of Internal Moderator or Verifier (see Section 3.5 and Appendix 3.5.5)

Section 2.4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating what you do is an essential part of good learning delivery. Monitoring is mainly dealing with **quantitative data** and collecting facts and figures about the work you are doing**.** Evaluation means collecting **qualitative data** from appraising the effectiveness of the systems, procedures and staff performance that enable learning to take place and that the learner has a truly valuable experience.

You need to gather and keep information about:

- the number of students you recruit to each course
- how many complete the course i.e. retention
- how many achieve a qualification at the end, if it is an accredited course
- the equality information about each learner (see Section 2.2.1 above)
- tracking the progress and pastoral support of learners through their progress reviews etc.
- any health and safety issues that happen during a course
- budgets and costs per course.

If you are delivering learning funded by a contract you have won or as part of a wider consortium, you will also need to complete forms, usually provided by the contract holder or negotiated with the funder which provide evidence that your learners have received the service for which you are being paid. You should keep a careful record of the number of activities or "outputs" you have delivered and always keep a copy of anything you send off as evidence so you can answer any queries.

You will also need to keep **qualititative** information to demonstrate the good work you are doing.

You need to gather and keep information about:

- staff meetings at which you have discussed the courses you run and how you want to improve the learning experience for your learners

- results from learner surveys held after induction and at the end of their course as part of your learner involvement strategy and from staff and employer surveys and feedback from other stakeholders, see footnote below

- lesson observation grades and the outcomes for teachers

- results of course reviews, held at the end of the year

- records of activities you have engaged in to find new ideas and projects about good practice, such as observations you have done at other learning provider centres

- reports to your Board and minutes of meetings with the Board where learning quality has been discussed.

- notes of meetings of other local networks or community planning groups which show how what you provide at your centre supports wider goals or targets

It is very important that you keep records and relevant data on all this type of information to be used as evidence for quality assurance and improvement in the Self Assessment Report (see Section 4) and in future for the Framework for Excellence. [1] (see footnote below and Section 5 – Framework for Excellence.)

[1] After September 2010, when the national pilots are completed, all providers funded by the LSC will be subject to the requirements of the Framework for Excellence – see Section 5 and Appendix 5

One of the most important and hardest parts of this work is to use all this material to keep improving your service. Evaluation is a key part of continuous improvement and by looking at your quantitative and qualitative data, you should start to see patterns, gaps and ideas for development.

All quality assurance monitoring and evaluation activities should be referred to in the Centre Quality Manual and in the Quality Policy (See Section 2.2.1 – Quality Policy

We have provided a sample Quality Policy in Appendix 2.2.1

One area we are all struggling with is how to measure the impact or **outcomes** of learning delivery. Funders are increasingly interested in outcomes ie. what actually changes as a result of their investment. There are a number of ways in which you can monitor impact.

Examples include:

- Doing an initial assessment of soft skills - confidence, speaking to a group, time keeping, organising etc and then doing another at the end of your work with the learner to evidence the journey travelled

- Tracking learners over time after they finish their work with you so you can show where they progressed to in terms of learning or work

- Working with community partners to evidence change eg. youth work with teenagers on a Saturday night, reducing crime and disturbance figures

- Health education activity reducing infant mortality, heart attacks, or early onset diabetes.

If you have any good ways of measuring impact, please share these with us so we can roll out your experience to other Network members.

Section 3: The Learner Journey

You are now ready to build your best practice on firm foundations. We are going to introduce you to embedding quality within the learner journey. The Learner's Journey maps the learning opportunities and the support offered to learners entering any type of learning or training. The following is a brief guide to all the elements that complete the learner's journey.
Looking at each step of the journey of a learner through your centre is about making sure your learners benefit from the very best learning experiences from the moment they come into your centre until they have completed all the learning they want to do with you and are progressing on to better and greater things!

So what is the learner journey?
It is often broken down into 9 bite sized chunks

Section 3.1: Recruitment

This is the process by which we attract new learners to our training programmes.

Your centre may be well used with people coming in all the time for advice, playgroups or just using your café. Your users may ask you to put on a course which interests them e.g. ESOL or Citizenship classes. If that's the case, your first task will be to find the funding you need to be able to pay a tutor to run the course.

Once you have sorted out the finances, you may find you have enough interest from your regular users to fill your course. A class of between 8 and 12 learners is a good target to aim for.

N.B. The BaseCamp manual won't help you with funding although the BME Learning Network is on the lookout all the time for funding opportunities for our members so make sure you keep us informed if your contact details change.

It is more common though that you will bid for funding to run courses because you have done some local research and have found there is some demand for particular learning opportunities. This means that you have enough money to run the training and have identified a suitable tutor. Again, the Network may be able to help you find tutors if this is an issue for you. What you need now are some learners!

You may want to produce an attractive promotional brochure and posters to attract some interest. Subject to the amount of funding you have, you may decide to produce a glossy prospectus for the range of courses you are going to put on. You may have a website you can update with information about your course. In all your publicity, you will need to make sure you feature images which reflect the diversity of the community and the learning on offer.

You may decide to hold an Open Day at your centre to inform people

about your learning opportunities; you may have a local newsletter or notice board you can use to get your message out. You may decide to do a leaflet drop in the letter boxes in your area or you may decide to leave piles of leaflets in local shops, health centres and schools. You may ask the local mosque or church to make an announcement.
We are told that word of mouth is often the most effective advertising.

Whatever you decide to do, you will need to make sure you don't exclude particular sections of the community either because they don't go where you are advertising or because the images or language you use in your publicity makes them feel that it is not meant for them.

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills carry out inspections of learning providers. Some of the good practice they have identified in the recruitment of learners are:

- working with partner agencies to encourage uptake of learning for example working with the local GP practice to publicise your courses

- promotion of equality of opportunity in recruitment and promotional materials. Some examples of positive images you can use to encourage people to take the first step to enrol on a course include: Women doing joinery or plumbing, a wheelchair user supporting a learner, men learning and working in non traditional settings, learners from minority ethnic groups and faith cultures

- taking steps to attract men into learning. Sometimes getting a few role models signed up is enough to get other men to come forward

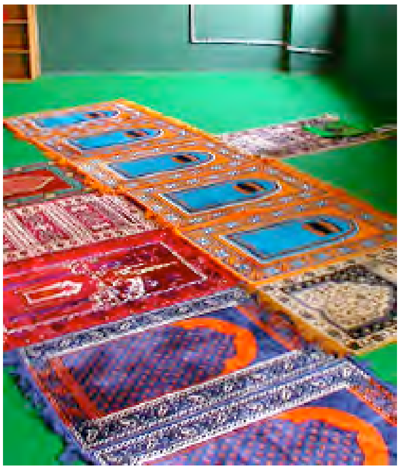
- ensuring that all promotional materials are screened for unintentional bias for particular groups. For example, only having pictures of 16 year old white female beauty therapists (still often seen) might unintentionally discourage men and people from minority ethnic groups to think that they would feel out of place, were they to join. Similarly, people with a disability may not realise the provider can make adaptations to enable them to access and benefit from the courses offered

- producing promotional brochures, prospectuses and web sites featuring messages in different community languages and formats where appropriate

- providing courses and support that will enable progression of learners from lower to higher levels. This may be within one institution that provides courses from pre-entry level to foundation degree, or through partnerships between providers (a basic skills evening class leading to college courses and eventually onto higher education)

- tailoring recruitment activities to encourage applications from people in under-represented groups, for example by challenging stereotypes traditionally associated with gender and disability, putting advertisements in media that is likely to reach minority groups or attending recruitment events in places that minority groups are likely to be. If you find it easy to attract BAME learners, you may need to think about what you could do to attract white members of the community into your centre

- providing facilities necessary or more likely to attract particular groups, such as different types of food, foot washing facilities, an area to pray or storage for prayer mats

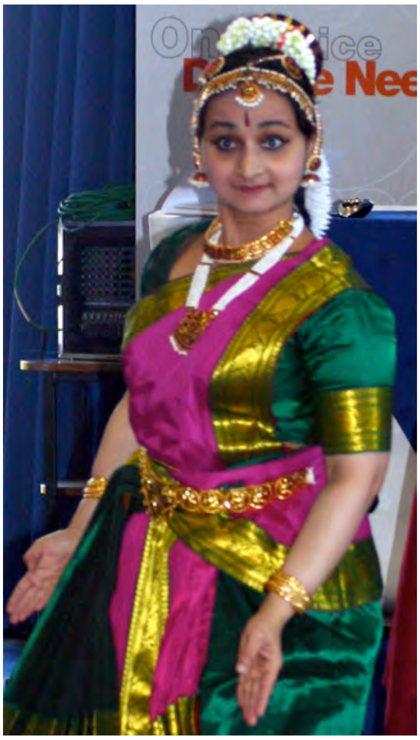


- researching in areas where there is poor recruitment. Asking people what would attract them into training?

- ensuring involvement with the local community through representation on community groups and taking an active part in local schemes to raise awareness of education and training

- working with the local authority in projects to engage with those not engaged in education and training

- making facilities available free of charge to a range of community groups to get local people who may not be aware of the provider to come onto the premises where they will be able to see what is available (examples include local councillor or police surgeries and neighbourhood watch meetings)



- simplifying or modernising the enrolment side of recruiting learners as complicated form filling can be off-putting. It has become a quicker and more organised process. Examples of effective practice include good use of electronic media (instant photos, ID cards, instant online input of data), early enrolment opportunities, long opening hours, Saturday enrolment, enrolment via the Internet, support in place (creche facilities, signers, hearing loops, etc)

- ensuring that recruitment procedures are subjected to quality monitoring activities such as observation and learner surveys and reviewed annually.

Health check from the ‘Excellence Gateway-Ofsted’

How do you ensure that your promotional materials are free from bias that might put people off applying to you?

In what formats are your promotional materials available (or can be if requested)?

Which groups of potential learners are under-represented on your programmes?

Have you done anything to make your provision more attractive to these under-represented groups of learners?

How have you told the local population about this?

How have you gone about asking people who do not apply to you why they don’t?

What links have you with the local community?

How do you encourage those under-represented in training onto your premises?

What have actions to widen participation have had any effect?

Can successful actions be applied to other groups of under-represented learners?

What feedback have you from learners on the enrolment process?

What could you do in order to address negative comments?

Once you have identified some people who have expressed an interest in your course, you need to check that the learning opportunity is suitable for them. You can do this by getting the tutor to speak to each one individually. S/he will need to do an initial ssessment, if necessary, possibly using an established diagnostic tool, in order to check :

- if the learner has the core skills (literacy, numeracy, ESOL skills, ICT skills) to cope with the course

- if s/he has any additional support needs e.g. physical disability, learning disability, mental health challenges

- if the learner is eligible to participate in the course. Funding requirements vary and may require the learners to have the right to remain in the UK, to be unemployed, to be a resident of the city, district or sub-region etc.

We have provided a sample Registration Form which helps you check for details in a structured way and Learner Support Claim Form in Appendix 3.1

Also see section 3.3 for more help with Initial Assessment

Section 3.2: Induction

When your learners start their course, you will need to provide a thorough induction. The skill of effective induction is to weave the information they need about the Centre, the tutor, course and what they might want to do next with the learning they have come for. If they spend the whole of their first session filling in forms, they are going to be fed up and may not come back for their next session!

First contact: Registering your learners (see 3.1 above) often happens weeks if not months before the course actually starts. So the first point of contact your learner may have with the centre could be a written invitation to the induction day/s.
If so, we recommend that administrative staff or the course tutor should follow up this invitation via a phone call to check that learners are attending.

It is important to clarify details of time, date, address and transport to the venue. Staff should be able to answer any questions that may come up in the phone call or reassure potential learners that their questions will be answered during the induction day. It is essential that staff are aware that some speakers of English as a second language or people with learning difficulties may need the information repeated. Work experience or volunteer staff should be trained during their staff induction in how to manage and encourage new learners, as the first point of contact is crucial for attendance and retention of learners.

Arriving at the Centre: On arrival, administrative staff should welcome learners to the centre and check their names against the register and ensure that their personal details and contact details and next of kin contact details are correct. It really helps learners to overcome first day nerves if one of your staff can show new learners into the induction room and offer them refreshments to break the ice.

Introducing the Induction tutor/leader: Tutors should have a rota of induction duties and new staff should be able to shadow experienced staff to learn how to do the induction. Even one day courses should have a course handbook which the learner can take away and look at later or show a family member who can explain its contents to them.

The course handbook: The tutor will hand out the course handbook to the group of learners, introduce him/herself and explain how the induction day/s will run. Learners can be invited to write their names and contact details on the inside cover of the handbook so they feel it's theirs and something useful.

Some tutors get the handbook copied onto an OHP or DVD although this may be a bit hi-tech depending on your group.

The Handbook will normally include:

- Information/photos of key people – diagram of centre staff
- Map of centre
- Transport details
- Breakdown of tasks to be covered in the course
- Reading lists (if relevant)
- Critical dates e.g. sessions, homework deadlines, reading weeks, assessments
- Assessment methods
- Contact details and biographies of tutors
- Details of course fees or other costs (if any)
- Information about Hardship funds and learners support payments e.g. childcare, travel etc.
- Complaints, Compliments and Appeals procedure
- Equality and Diversity procedure.

Introducing the Centre: The Induction tutor can introduce the learners to the Centre by showing them the diagram and map in the Handbook. Then it's a good idea to take the learners on a tour of the centre; this is really important to help keep your learners safe – they need to know where they can go to the toilet, get a drink, get out of the building in case of fire, where to find the prayer room, if there is one and where to find a first aider. You could introduce administrative and management staff who might give a short description of their role e.g. which member of staff helps with issues relating to teaching/ immigration/ benefits/ bus passes. It is important to point out any appointments (e.g. one to ones with the tutor) and procedures (like signing in and out) that need to be adhered to at this point. It is a real help to have photos up on the walls of both tutor and office staff and to have numbers or names on class room

doors to help people get their bearings. Encourage your staff to wear name badges as this helps your learners work out who is who!
At each point of the tour, it is important to encourage learners to ask questions, but be aware that some people, depending on their cultural and educational background, may not be used to questioning staff and some learners may not have the confidence to ask questions.

Starting your first lesson: Once you get back to the classroom, you might want to help the group get to know each other by using an "Icebreaker" exercise. Examples include:

- A quiz to help them find out about each other or about the Centre
- Matching photos of staff to their role - teaching or admin etc
- A blank map for them to complete and help them identify fire exits/canteen/toilets
- A memory game which encourages them to learn each other's names
- A group discussion about ground rules, what we want from learners and what learners want from us.

Make sure you introduce yourself.
You can work through the Course Handbook and look at the weekly plan times of lessons and breaks. You might want to explore any barriers to attendance by getting a discussion going about time management, work commitments, family responsibilities, appointments and anything else which may affect attendance and retention. You can give out contact details so they can phone in if they can't attend.

You need to introduce the important policies which affect your learners e.g. Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Compliments and Complaints, Appeals and Malpractice. You could use a powerpoint to draw out the main points.

Learners often complain that all the first session is taken up filling in forms and talking about everything except the topics they have come to study. You do need to cover all these topics but try to do so in a fun way and mix the induction topics up with some initial learning if you can.

Health check from the 'Excellence Gateway-Ofsted'

How do staff check that induction procedures set out their expectations for learners?

How is induction planned to meet the needs of all learners?

What common resources are available to all staff delivering induction?

How are ice-breakers or team-building activities used in induction?

Which parts of induction do learners find most interesting?

Are there any lessons from this that could be applied to other areas?

How do you check that learners understand the important points in induction?

How do you reinforce the main points of induction throughout the learning programme?

How do you ensure that late starters receive an adequate induction?

Do learners moving from one level of qualification to another receive an induction?

How do you collect and use the views of learners on induction?

If learners have a handbook, do they use it following induction?

Do you have quality improvement procedures in place to identify good practice in induction, such as learner surveys, observation and programme review?

Does induction change following review?

Section 3.3: Initial Assessment

There is a great deal of overlap between initial and diagnostic assessment. You will probably have done some assessment at the point at which you registered your learner (see 3.1 above). However in order to be sure you understand where your learners are starting from and if they have any specific needs, you will need to do some diagnostic assessment early on in your course.

It is a good idea to explain to the learners that in order to make their learning experience a positive and successful one, that a basic exploration of their literacy, numeracy and/or ESOL needs is carried out in order to discover their level of knowledge and the areas they need to improve.

Tutors choose and design diagnostic assessment techniques for a wide range of purposes: e.g. a written assignment to gauge formal writing skills; a line-numbered piece of text for assessing reading speed; a group discussion allowing observation of learners' communication, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills in action.

It is advisable to use a wide range of assessment techniques in order to inform your course design and for effective learning on courses or programs to take account of individual needs.

<u>Formal Diagnostic Processes</u>

If your organisation has already run the course, you could go to the scheme of work and the lessons plans and work out some tests that would help you assess what additional help your learners may need to get the most out of the course. It is helpful to explain to the learners that the diagnostic tools are being used in order that the tutor can make informed choices in the planning of the course to meet individual needs, as some learners may have had negative learning experiences in the past, or in some cases have been excluded from education.

Encourage learners' participation by explaining that the learning process will be planned with their input and agreement based on their identified needs and assure learners that they will receive help to complete the diagnostic if necessary. For example, the tutor may need to provide teaching support in using IT if the test is on-line or accessed on the computer. (e.g. targetskills.net)

Pre-course tests are useful for identifying weaknesses, strengths and knowledge relating to course objectives, whether the focus is on practical, functional or intellectual skills. Literacy and Numeracy initial and diagnostic assessment tests are important examples.

They are available at basic level upwards within the national literacy framework, for ESOL, general and employment specific needs. They can help tutors to decide the level of functional skills to incorporate into a course or check a student's level where an entry requirement applies.

Diagnostic tests are also available to assess for dyslexia.

You can find some examples of diagnostic tests on the following websites:
Alliance for Lifelong Learning:
http://archive.basic-skills.co.uk/aboutus/faqs#difference,
Department of Innovations and, Universities and Skills:
www.dius.gov.uk Lifelong Learning UK: www.learndirect.co.uk
You may have to adapt available diagnostic tools to meet your learners' needs.

Remember the diagnostic process is simply a starting point of the learning journey and informs action planning and ongoing support.

Informal Diagnostic Processes

Apart from formal methods of assessing the starting level of your learners, there are a range of informal methods you can use to gain an understanding of learners' abilities and needs. These include information from learners' application forms and enrolment documents which can give baseline information on literacy, previous qualifications and special educational needs.

Qualifications of recent school leavers will indicate current study skills, recent learning success or otherwise and any relevant learning. An older student with no post-compulsory learning may need specific early support in the development of study skills, whilst a mature student with a number of qualifications gained over a number of years may possess good study skills and strong motivation for life long learning. All this can begin to inform the various levels of differentiation the tutor may need to plan into the teaching programme.

A one to one diagnostic meeting

Where special needs have been identified, talking directly with the learner on how their needs might best be met is crucial to help empower a disabled learner and build their confidence in the system and to make sure the tutor is putting the right support in place.

Remember – the Golden Rule: Always Ask !!

Informal chats, tasters and induction programmes can offer useful insights into your learners' needs (see 3.2 Induction). Students can air concerns and aspirations and time allowing, they may be able to try out types of learning and receive guidance on course demands.

Pre-course Interviews

These may be essential for some courses. For example if a student is planning to study for a Diploma in Counselling, emotional stability, self-awareness and strong personal commitment are necessary for the completion of the course. However it may not be necessary to interview for a short leisure course.

Learning Style Inventories

These can be used in diagnostic assessment. Honey and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire is one of the most commonly used. It builds on the major phases of learning defined by Kolb in the 1970s, who suggested that most people have preferred learning styles although ideally, proficiency in them all is needed for effective learning.

The concept highlights the benefits of planning learning with a range of activities to suit all styles; and the questionnaire raises learners' awareness of their own preferred or weaker styles. Other models are McCarthy's 4MAT system also based on Kolb and Gregorc's learning theory. A recent addition is Race's (2005) inventory based on what he terms the 'five factors of learning'. Coffield et al (2004), conducted a systematic review of the major models. One concern raised is that the style of learning preferred by the learner changes with context i.e. with what they are learning.

You can download a range of these questionnaires from the internet: e.g.
www.brainboxx.co.uk/a3_aspects/pages/VAK_quest_2.htm
www.businessballs.com/freematerialsinword/vaklearningstylesquestionnaireselftest.doc

We have also provided a very basic learning styles questionnaire in Appendix 3.3 which assesses learning preferences based on four parameters: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic or physical.

Motivation

Knowing what motivates individuals can be vital for successful course design. An ice - breaker during the induction, where learners share their reasons for attending, is one way to find out. Extrinsic motivators such as the promise of government benefits or better wages are weak in comparison to intrinsic motivators such as the need for achievement and to fulfil personal potential.

Health check from the ‘Excellence Gateway-Ofsted’

Have you considered:

- what is the prior attainment of learners (qualifications and experience, particularly that which is relevant to the qualification/programme)?
- what should your learners achieve *as a minimum* by the end of their programme?
- To do this, what additional support needs do they have and how can you meet them?
- if they have prior qualifications or experience, can they be used to set other higher or additional qualifications or units?
- what underpinning skills do they require, including communication, literacy, numeracy and language
- if applicable, what are your employers’ expectations ?
- if work-based learners, how do job roles match learning and assessment requirements?
- what are the needs of other stakeholders, partners, funding bodies and referral agencies?
- what are the awarding body’s expectations?
- what are the needs of the skills sector?
- are there specific legal requirements? (e.g. child protection screening?)
- equality and diversity issues
- learners’ learning styles and personal characteristics – if you assess these, how do you intend to use them?

Section 3.4: Individual Learning Plans

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) helps the learner to engage actively and be motivated to cooperate in the learning process; it helps the learner think through where s/he is going with the current learning intervention as a starting point.

The ILP is owned by the learner and supported by the tutor; it records the learning goals and progression routes based on the initial diagnostic and assessment information.

Within the ILP, an agreed set of targets will have been discussed and agreed between the tutor and learner. It is essential that the targets are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time limited. This means they will be based at the appropriate level for the learner as informed by the diagnostic and achievable within the time constraints of the learner, the course and the delivery organisation.

Regular reviews of the learning process will keep the learning plan up to date and relevant and allow a partnership approach to planning the next steps and introducing new targets.

Individual Learning Plans are working documents that can be used by the learner to reflect on what they have achieved and what the next steps are:

We have provided two examples in Appendix 3.4.

Questions that are useful to ask are:

Where am I now?
This can be worked out through discussions between the tutor and the learner, through self assessment using online interactive tests of knowledge, or through quizzes and interactive informal team games.

Where do I want to get to?
The learner may need help to set goals and progression routes. S/he needs to consider why s/he should work for a qualification and what skills s/he needs to work on?

How do I get there?
You may want to use both individual and group learning activities to help the learners decide how they want to achieve their goals. An Information, Advice and Guidance practitioner may be able to help here.

How's it going?
The learner should be encouraged to look at their ILP on a regular basis and reflect on how they are achieving and what changes may need to be made.

How did I do? Did I get there?
At the end of the learning intervention, the learner can review progress and celebrate success.

Where next?
The learner then needs to think about moving on. You will need to help by advising about progression opportunities (see section 3.9 below)

.

You can get further information on the value of ILPs from: Managing the Learner Journey - Quality Improvement Agency Skills for Life Improvement Programme www.sflip.org.uk

<u>The benefits of using ILPs</u>

Learners benefit from ILPs in that they take ownership of their learning and gain some understanding of how they learn. Learners can practice their learning in a wider context such as in the home or community and address barriers to learning by finding support to remove them.

Tutors can use ILPs to listen and discuss the learning process from the diagnostic stage through to the action planning including additional support and progression and exit routes.

Tutors can use ILPs to ensure learners are following the right courses/programmes and that they are achieving according to their expectations, for example, making the learning process as wide as possible to improve skills and competence in such as in the workplace, community or leisure activities.

Managers can use ILPs to monitor learner progress to evaluate learners' responses to education approaches, to sustain standards and improve services, record RARPA (Recognition and Recording of Progress and Achievement process) and to monitor quality of provision and provide data for impact measures.
It is important to recognise that Individual Learning Plans can be flexible and will develop over time when learners have reflected on how well they have met with their expectations.

Monitoring learning and giving feedback

The Skills for Life Improvement Programme suggests that tutors develop error-marking checklists with learners and agree how errors are to be recorded, include learners in the marking of their own and others' work.
It is useful to promote self and peer assessment with learners so that they can evaluate their own progress.
It is helpful to give clear and concise feedback and give positive feedback for achievements as well as being clear about what element of learning needs to be improved.

Health check from the ‘Excellence Gateway-Ofsted’

Does the proforma you use have sections that reflect the requirements of all those involved in the delivery of training (employers, funding bodies, awarding bodies, assessors, tutors, specialist support staff)?

List any amendments that are necessary.

Take a sample of individual learning plans from across your provision. Is each plan individual to the learner, reflecting each learner’s initial assessment (including necessary support and taking account of previous experience and qualifications) and goals (with dates for achieving various milestones such as individual units, key skills, etc)?

How have learners been involved in writing their individual learning plans and in updating them as required?

How are targets broken down so that learners know the steps that they are expected to achieve and when they should do so (clear and measurable)?

Is there any good practice that could be shared between programmes (if ‘yes’ list it)?

How are individual learning plans used during review/tutorial activities?

Do all those who require it have access to the individual learning plans?

Are individual learning plans ‘live’ documents?

How do quality systems check how well individual learning plans are being used?

Section 3.5: Teaching and Learning

Sharing best practice in teaching and learning is a major undertaking and one to which we can't do justice in this Quality Manual. We will therefore focus on just a few key aspects that will enable your organisation to be confident that the teaching and learning you are delivering is effective.

Learner Involvement Strategy: Since 2007 all providers funded by the LSC are required to produce a strategy to outline all the methods and activities they will use to motivate the learner and gain their full participation in their learning journey. This just requires a simple paper to show how you will do this, with things like learner surveys, pastoral support from tutors, catering services for learners and enrichment through extra curricula activities.

Schemes of Work: Schemes of work are guidelines to support medium and long-term planning for a whole programme of work. You only need a scheme of work if there is more than one session that your learners will be studying. They describe the major aims of the course, the key objectives and learning outcomes and the assessment methods that will be used to check progress. e.g. by external exam methods; if so have you built into your scheme of work time to prepare for exams?

If learners are to produce a portfolio of evidence, it is important to be explicit about how portfolios are to be produced and what support or guidance is being offered.

They are made up of units that together cover the whole programme of study. Each unit sets out learning objectives (which are based on the programme of study), suggests teaching activities to meet these objectives and defines outcomes for the learners.

If the course you are running has been run before by your tutor, there may already be scheme of work in place. If the course is accredited, the scheme of work will have to be approved by the accrediting body before you can go ahead and deliver it. Some accredited courses have set schemes of work. Most however specify the assessment criteria and possibly learning outcomes and expect the tutor to design the scheme of work which will achieve those ends.

The scheme of work should have details of the centre where the course is running, along with the name of the course, venue and tutor. It is important to show the start and end dates and the time and day/s that learners can attend the course.

The aims of the course should relate to the course syllabus; it would be good practice to number the Key Objectives and Learning Outcomes to cross reference to your weekly or daily lesson plans.

While the tutor is responsible for developing the scheme of work, the Centre's Quality Manager should check it and make sure it is thorough and details what the learners will be doing and why from their first lesson to the end of the course.

We have reproduced a model Scheme of Work developed by Kirklees Post 16 and Adult Learning as it offers clear guidance on what each section should include. You can find it in Appendix 3.5.1.

<u>Lesson plans:</u> Each lesson your Centre runs, whatever the content, should have a lesson plan. Where there is a Scheme of Work, the tutor will base their lesson plans on the format specified in that to make sure the whole of the topic area is covered within a given amount of time within bite size chunks of manageable information.

Many organisations will use a standard lesson plan format, however it is essential that the lesson plan is flexible and adaptable according to the tutor's needs as it is a resource that is meant to help the tutor in his/her planning and delivery.

Briefly, a lesson plan should record:

- the date, course and times
- information about the venue
- numbers of students
- subject or topic

- the teachers' intentions or aims for the lesson and the learning outcomes that the students should achieve by the end of the lesson
- what previous knowledge of the learner is known or assumed
- what resources the tutor will use.

The assessment method used to see how the learning outcomes have been reached (or not).

Additional information which shows how the tutor has incorporated equal opportunities into the lesson planning by including methods and/or resources to address the differing needs of the learners attending the course.
To help the tutor to deliver the lesson and keep on track, it is important to indicate the different stages of the lesson and approximately how long each stage will take to deliver the subject matter.

The above stages are made explicit by indicating both the tutor and the learner activity and any resources being used at the given time, including how differentiation is being incorporated for various learning styles and abilities of the individual learners as well as for the whole group.

An example of a lesson plan is provided in Appendix 3.5.2 For further examples of lesson plans see: www.into-teaching.co.uk and www.teachernet.gov.uk.

Lesson Evaluation: Following each lesson it is good practice for the tutor to assess how well s/he met the objectives in the given time and to evaluate what went well in the lesson and what changes s/he would make if s/he were to do the lesson again.
It is good practice for the Quality Manager to discuss this reflection with the tutor so that the organisation is continually improving the service you provide.

It is good practice for the Quality Manager to arrange regular meetings with each tutor as a form of appraisal, to discuss their evaluation of their lessons and discuss what and how they can improve, so that the organisation is continually improving the service you provide.

Lesson Observation Observation of tutors by appropriately qualified staff members or peers also encourages reflection on practice and may highlight the need for support or further training and encourage good practice. Your Internal Moderator (or Verifier) – see below – should also be working out a regular timetable to observe all your tutors and record it in your quality cycle calendar so their observation is a regular part of your quality cycle.

It is helpful for tutors to have time to network with peers and share good practice, to gain insight to other organisational issues and have some input to planning and decision making processes that may impact on their ability to deliver to learners.

If you are giving feed back to a colleague on their teaching practice, it is important to include what went well in the lesson as well as what could be changed.

We have provided a form you could use for your observations in Appendix 3.5.3.

Learner Evaluation of lesson: Don't forget that the best judge of an effective lesson is the learner. You should make sure that your learners have the opportunity to give feedback about their learning experience on a regular basis.

Teachers may use this form at any time to help their own improvement, or it could be done by the observer as part of a Lesson Observation process, asking the tutor to go out while the learners are asked for comments about the lesson by the observer .

We have provided a Learner Feedback form in Appendix 3.5.4.

Internal Verification : The Centre Quality Manager will identify a suitably trained Internal Verifier to oversee that the teaching and learning, assessment, support and progresss tracking are standardised across the organisation. They will produce a tutor handbook for the tutors and provide guidance and support to ensure they are delivering well.

We have provided further quidance on Internal Verication in Appendix 3.5.5.

Learner evaluation of course : You should also carry out a learner survey using a simple questionnaire, at least once a year and some providers will also do one after Induction. In this, they can give their views on teaching and learning across their whole course, the level of support they have had and how much the Centre facilities may have enhanced or inhibited their learning. The results should be collated and used to develop improvement actions. You should feed back both the results of your survey and the actions you plan to take to your learners. You can do this in a meeting, on-line, using posters, with leaflets or in an informal discussion at the end of a lesson. You should take a record of your consultation and improvement proposals forward into the Self Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

We have included a simple questionnaire for you to use in Appendix 3.5.6

Course Review
At the end of every programme, the delivery team should have a meeting to discuss the quality of the course and how it could be improved.
The evidence used for the review will come from the recruitment, retention and achievement statistics, the lesson observations, the learner evaluations and internal verification. Even if there are no immediate plans to run this course again, the action points should be recorded and taken forward as evidence into Self Assessment and the QIP (see Section 4 – Self Assessment) and comments from external verifiers.

Equality and Diversity: All planning from the Induction stage through to agreeing the progression route for your learners should take into consideration what steps can be taken to meet individual needs.

Things to include would be for example; access to the building, addressing special needs, having policies and procedures in place to protect peoples' rights and giving time to discuss these issues with learners as a group and on an individual basis.

Organisations have a duty of care to those attending their courses and this should be reflected in each of the planning stages in the learners' journey and within the culture and ethos of the organisation.

Tutors also have a duty of care within the classroom environment, ensuring people are safe and comfortable both from external risk e.g. access to fire exits and from intrinsic issues or physical and/or mental health issues that may need to be addressed or planned for.

A risk assessment should be carried out during the initial induction and screening process to ensure any special needs are being addressed and that individuals are not being put at risk by others.

Also See Section 2.2.2 Health and Safety Policy and Section 2.2.3 Equality and Diversity Policy

Section 3.6: Progress Reviews

Your tutors will be checking on your learners' progress at every stage of the teaching process, through observation, assessment (see Section 3.7) and talking to them about how they are getting on. However, it is important to formalise this at appropriate stages of the course so that there is a record both for the learner, the tutor and the organisation.

Progress doesn't have to be academic. There are some great tools being developed that enable you to track the progress learners are making with their soft skills such as confidence, time management, communication, self-esteem, personal hygiene, behaviour etc. **We have included two examples provided to us by NIACE in Appendix 3.6.**

As we discussed in section 3.4, it is important to follow up the initial Individual Learning Plan or ILP with regular progress reviews where you update the Plan with the learner so they can recognise the strides they are making.

In the progress review the tutor must keep records to indicate how much progress has been made towards the agreed targets, what barriers there may be in preventing the learner from achieving those targets and it should also indicate if there is a need to change the targets.

Both learner and tutor can look at work produced in the classroom, results from tests, homework, issues affecting the learner outside the classroom, for example leisure activities or voluntary or paid work or the need to complete application forms for work or benefits.

Issues may arise for the learner where they feel they need to be on a different course or working at a higher or lower level; personal issues may arise that need addressing, for example if the learner has moved out of the area or has difficulty in attending because of family commitments.
It is a good idea to ask your tutor to have an appointments system to see learners individually, sticking to the prescribed time and having clear boundaries about what is within the tutor's remit to address and what

other agencies and support mechanisms there are for the learner to access.

It is important to encourage and support the learners' independence and to keep the focus on what the targets and expected learning outcomes are.

Following the review it is important that the learner understands that signing an agreement at the end of the review is a contract that they must actively take part in, whether that means completing extra homework on a weekly basis to get them on target or by improving attendance or time keeping etc.

Attendance Registers: This of course means you need to make sure your tutors are recording attendance. This is often a crucial piece of evidence required by funders to help you prove that you have delivered the service you are being funded for. LSC, soon to be Skills Funding Agency, contracts often specify the number of hours a learner should study before you can claim the course as an output.

Using a register will indicate who is turning up for classes and for reviews it may indicate why progression is not on course and indicate the need to address any underlying issues that the tutor may not be aware of that is affecting the learner's progress. If there are issues beyond the scope of the tutor or organisation that are preventing attendance to the course, again, it is important to be able to signpost learners to the appropriate organisation that provides Information , Advice and Guidance (IAG) for learners. This means that your Centre need to develop a good contact list of referral bodies which your tutors can use if a learner needs specialist support.

If, following a review where any issues have been addressed, the learner's attendance does not improve, it may be necessary to carry out any in-house procedures to inform the learner in an official capacity that their opportunity to continue the course may be curtailed.
It is essential that risk assessments are carried out during the induction process and if non - attendance indicates that a learner may be at risk,

then it is important that the tutor knows s/he should inform Centre management and follow internal safeguarding policies and procedures relating to risk so that any appropriate agencies may be informed.

We have provided two different registers you may want to use in Appendix 3.6.3 and 3.6.4.

Other issues you might like to consider to make sure your Centre is reviewing progress effectively include:

- Providing training for your tutors on carrying out progress reviews; you get encourage a group of tutors to share best practice

- If you are checking the progress of a learner who is doing work experience, then make sure the placement provider is part of the review. This applies to anyone else who may have an involvement in the learning experience

- Have reviews more frequently for learners with specific support needs and for those who are not performing as strongly as other members of the group

- Make sure that you keep a written record of the review.

Health check from the ‘Excellence Gateway-Ofsted’

What training have staff who conduct progress reviews received?

How are reviews included as part of induction for learners (and employers)?

How is their importance covered in handbooks for learners (and employers)?

How does your planning for when progress reviews should take place reflect the needs of individual learners?

How do you monitor that progress review meetings are held when they are supposed to be?

How do you check that actions and targets set at one meeting are reviewed at the next?

How do you check that learners and employers understand the targets set at progress reviews?

How are additional support needs included at progress review meetings?

Can you show that individual learning plans are amended at progress review meetings?

How do those involved at the meetings receive a copy of the review record?

How do you know that those involved find the progress review meetings useful?

Depending on the age of learners, how do you keep the parents/guardians of learners informed about progress?

How are progress review meetings included as part of quality improvement procedures and activities?

Does this give you information on both the completion of review paperwork and the actual process?

Section 3.7: Assessment

Assessment takes place both formally and informally throughout the learner's journey at your Centre. We have already looked at the initial assessment that you need to do at the recruitment stage to make sure the course your learner has expressed an interest in is right for them. (see section 3.1) Once they have joined the class, we have considered more detailed initial or diagnostic assessment so that your tutors are clear what specific support they need to provide as the course rolls out (see section 3.3).

Throughout the teaching programme, the tutor will be carrying out ongoing or formative assessment to provide feedback to the learner on progress as well as for the tutor to gauge their success in passing on the skills and knowledge the learner seeks.

Informal assessment through observation may include what has already been learnt from the initial contact with the learner, what you know of their personal and educational background, how they perform within a group and on an individual basis, what their preferred learning style is, their attendance and motivation to attend classes and their reasons for setting the goals or targets that they have set for themselves.

Informal assessments can include quick fun quizzes or games or team exercises to test learning, or fun competitive spelling tests or project work, or presentations by teams on a given or chosen subject.

Formal Assessment includes the initial assessment and diagnostic followed up by regular 'formative assessments' which should inform the learner and tutor what has been learnt and indicate what may need to be changed within the ILP to address strengths and weaknesses. If the context within the curriculum is appropriate to the needs of the learners then the formative assessment should indicate an improvement in learning.
If the course has been run before, there may be formative assessments that the tutor can use however tutors are often expected to produce their

own formative assessments based on what their targets are for their learners and on external and organisational targets.

If the course includes external assessment through examination, the use of mock exam papers gives the learners good practice as does the use of real examples of tests produced by the appropriate external examining body.

Learners can do self-assessment online by using interactive systems that will feed back their results and give an indication of what they need to revise.

All course work and results from tests should be kept in the learner's portfolio and be included in any formative assessments. Learners often have strengths in one area and weaknesses in others; this may simply be an indication of preference for the subject matter in one area as opposed to another. It may however reveal the need for additional support; for example, in ESOL, many learners are at a higher level in speaking and listening than they are in reading and writing which may indicate a need to change your curriculum to included more reading and writing if that is the exam they sitting.

Summative assessment "sums up" the learning that has taken place and is usually done as the course nears its completion. This may be done by looking back at a series of tests administered over the lifetime of the course or in a final examination process. The approach your tutors take to summative assessment will depend largely on the nature of the course and whether or not it is accredited.

The LSC has written a useful reference book on assessment of non-accredited learning entitled: "Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning"

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/quality/performanceachievement/recognising-recording-progress-achievement-july-2005.pdf

They suggest the use of a wide range of tools to measure and record the learners' progress including: Records of learner self-assessment, group and peer assessment, tutor records of assessment activities and individual or group progress and achievement. Learners' files, journals, diaries, portfolios, artwork, videos, audiotapes, performances, exhibitions and displays, individual or group learner testimony, artifacts and photographs.

The Quality Improvement Agency, in its Skills For Life Improvement Programme identifies the following as keys to high quality assessment:

- They happen throughout learning, using the right type of assessment for the right purpose at the right time
- are learner-centred, ensuring that the learner is informed and supported to make decisions based on the outcomes of assessment
- are positive, building learner confidence, self esteem and motivation by celebrating strengths and achievements as well as identifying learning needs
- are forward looking, taking account of the learner's goals and aspirations for future study, work or for their personal life
- are holistic, building up a picture of a learner's achievements, interests and previous learning experiences as well as their skills levels
- are appropriate, using a range of approaches, methods and tools that suit individuals and their learning context
- include assessment of literacy, numeracy and language skills (sometimes called Skills for Life), crucial to enabling individuals to improve their life chances
- make effective use of assessment data at all levels, informing:
  - referral to learning, training or employment opportunities
  - curriculum offer and design
  - teaching and learning approaches
  - individual goals and targets
  - position individual learning plans at their centre,
  - recording assessment outcomes, teaching and learning targets, strategies and activities, progress, achievements and progression routes
- are monitored and evaluated as part of the self-assessment process, identifying priorities and actions for quality improvement.

Section 3.8: Achievement

How well your learners achieve is perhaps the most important question you need to be able to answer as this lies at the heart of the quality process. As you will see in Chapter 4, the judgements you make about the services you offer are based on evidence of achievement.

If you work with school students or are a school governor, you will know that hard outcomes based on grades and exam results are only half the story; it is the evidence you can provide of "value added" or the progress the learner has made against predicted success that counts as much. So, if you have your assessment systems working well and your tutors have recorded the different measures your Centre has developed to record the progress made by your learners, then you will be well placed to claim a high grade for Achievement and Standards in your Self Assessment Report (SAR).

One useful way to collate the data is to ask your tutors to complete a Record of Achievement for each cohort they teach. You could put this in the Tutor Handbook. This will help you analyse the data and have easy access for completing your SAR.

A form you could use is provided in Appendix 3.8. This is based on a model provided by Kirklees Adult and Community Learning.

<u>Retention Rates</u>: Going back to your Attendance Registers (see section 3.6) you need to do an analysis of retention rates. How many of your learners registered on Day 1 and how many were left at the end of the course?

While this is not wholly in the hands of the Centre or the tutor, the more effective the motivation and support provided, the more likely it is that you will have 100% retention. As quality depends largely on continuous improvement, it's a good idea to keep retention records from previous years so you can show in your SAR how the steps you have taken to improve retention have impacted on the finish rates.

Satisfaction Rates: We have already looked at the importance of getting feedback from your learners and we have provided forms for you to use in Appendix 3.5.4 and 3.5.6. It's good to record satisfaction rates on an ongoing basis and again work out with the team how these might be improved and measure the impact of any changes. One of our Network members saw that a tutor was getting low scores from learners in terms of controlling the group. This led to a decision not to hire that tutor the following year.

To discover how well learners are achieving we need to ask:

- How does your organisation demonstrate how it is supporting its' learners?
- How does it show that it is planning effectively?
- How is it providing targeted support to help learners to reach their goals?
- How does the quality of training affect achievement and how does it motivate learners?

Excellence Gateway suggests five quality improvement actions that your organisation can adapt and use to plan improvements in provision, in summary they are:

1) Examine the way you plan and prepare for learner achievement and think through what you understand and recognise achievement to be.
2) Discuss how you support learners to achieve
3) Look at what type of teaching and training you provide. What is the impact on the learner?
4) Find what motivates learners to achieve. What rewards are offered for achievement?
5) Use research data to help plan future courses.

Section 3.9: Progression

The end of the course or the final exam is not the end of the learners' journey. The support your Centre provides not only looks at the here and now but at what the aims and future objectives the learner has whether that means progressing onto further training or education or to applying for jobs, or work placements or apprenticeships.

Personal: Planning achievable targets empowers the learner to reflect on the learning process and see what they have been able to achieve and provides realistic planning for their future progress. Within the learners' Individual Learning Plans, it is important to include both short, medium and long term goals within their personal aims.

Organisational: Organisations should consider progress both pre- and post- exit by using learner surveys which will indicate their future potential destinations and opportunities for further training or employment. Tracking learners throughout their journeys both during and after provision can provide invaluable information that can be included in future planning. All information should be collected and analysed against internal and external targets.

External: Throughout the learners' journey, it is important to include links to further training and potential work opportunities or placements and to include access to Information, Advice and Guidance services.

Follow up: A follow up of the learners' journey through surveys can capture and feed back data to inform further needs for skills for life support.

It is useful to develop progression routes from level to level which may include for example literacy, language and numeracy levels needed to succeed at each stage.

Feeding progression information into course reviews, learner profiles and planning can lead to improved retention and achievement.

There are six quality improvement actions that can be taken to improve progression practices, to accomplish these organisations need to ask certain questions such as:

1) What do we mean by progression?
2) How do we map our progression routes?
3) What support do we give to progress?
4) How do we improve collection of progression destinations?
5) How do we use data about progression?
6) How do we monitor individual learners' progression?

Further information on progression can be downloaded from the Excellence Gateway Progression site: http://tlp.excellencegateway.org.uk/tlp/progression/index.html

Section 4: Self Assessment

Having read and thought through the implications for your Centre of delivering good practice in the learner journey as described in Section 3 above, you may well be feeling a bit overwhelmed. It is natural to view getting Quality across the board as a long haul and it is expected that even if we do not get it quite right first time, we must be continually striving to do better and get continuous improvement.

Many funders expect us to be able to provide evidence that we are continuously thinking about quality and building our capacity to improve. So delivering quality is best seen as a journey and not final destination and something we need to work at for as long as we propose to offer learning and skills. As we improve at each stage we should be also shifting our standards and objectives upwards – raising the bar so we are always getting better.

Section 4.1: Introducing the SAR and QIP

As part of the process of continuous improvement, providers are required to carry out a self-assessment and produce a Self Assessment Report (SAR) once a year. In this process we must make judgements about the strengths and areas for improvement (often referred to as 'areas for improvement' rather than weaknesses) in our organisation. We do this by considering how we address the key questions in The Common Inspection Framework (CIF). The CIF is an inspection model that was streamlined and made common to all government funded provision in 2003 and there have been several modifications since, the latest being in 2009.

(For the full version see **http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/** and use the search facility)

The Self Assessment process that leads up to producing the report is focussed on collecting all the evidence we have about our performance throughout the year and using it to make these judgements about our strengths and areas for improvement. After making judgements on the evidence we should then grade our provision, according the four point scale in the CIF and all this is recorded in the Self Assessment Report (SAR).

The common grading scale for all inspection judgements is:

Grade 1 – outstanding
Grade 2 – good
Grade 3 – satisfactory
Grade 4 – inadequate

The SAR will be looked at by Ofsted inspectors, by any accrediting body and by funders. It will provide the basis for any checks these reviewers want to make. When a centre is being inspected by Ofsted, the inspectors will see your SAR and make a judgement on how accurate are the judgements and grades you have given in your own assessment of your performance, compared with what they find in reality. The accuracy of the judgements and grades contained in the report is seen as an indicator of the organisation's ability to self improve and therefore of good leadership and management.

We have provided a summary from the full CIF document, to help you with the questions and which aspects require judgements and grades, in Appendix 4.1

After writing the Report we then need to produce a Quality Improvement and development Plan (QIP) to action the improvements needed. The QIP should be a detailed Action Plan which sets out how you are going to make the improvements you are planning for the coming year. It should include improvement actions to build on your strengths, as well as the weaknesses in the SAR. It must have measurable outcomes, clear actions and tasks identified for each improvement, whom in your centre will be responsible for doing them, the targets and timescales. The tasks should have a clear focus on impact on the learner and their success. The plan can be added as an appendix or incorporated into your Strategic or Business Plan.

If you work with subcontractors, you need to ensure that they also plan action for improvement and you should incorporate or cross-reference their actions within your own plan.

We have provided a sample Quality Improvement Action Plan in Appendix 4.2 but please note, this is for guidance only and you should customise it for your own centre

Even though you may be tempted to write both documents for the external audience – to jump through the hoops! – actually the Self Assessment process is a great exercise for you and your Centre to improve your business. It helps you to think through how you are doing with all your processes, what you think you are doing well, what you need to improve and what new things you perhaps need to take on. These documents are great tools for stimulating innovation.

"Do self-assessment to improve your business rather than because of inspection."
Wendy Shucksmith - Head of quality, Protocol Skills

"I originally felt that the self-assessment report was just something we had to complete for the inspectorate. But when we'd completed our first SAR we found that it had brought together all of our disparate quality-assurance work into an easily manageable document. The benefit of this was to package things neatly and help us to recognise that everything is linked together. It helped us articulate what we were doing - to ourselves, to the staff and to the students so that everyone knew how we were maintaining the school's high standards.
Kate Ashcroft - Executive Director, Oxford School of Drama

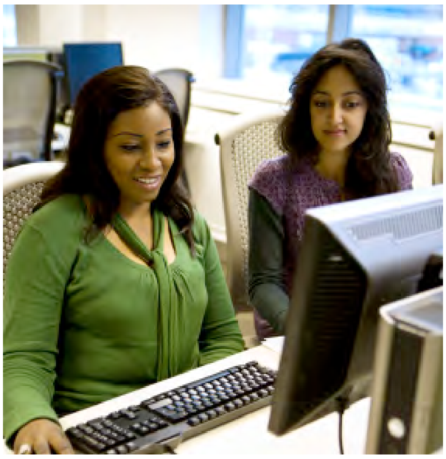
There are some essential aspects shown below that we must ensure are present in the whole process of Self Assessment and reflected in Self Assessment Report.

The Process should :

- be integrated within all other quality improvement activities and all aspects of quality monitoring and evaluation should be recorded and collected as evidence throughout the year as they happen; this includes all procedures such as lesson observation, learner progress reviews, surveys and other feedback from learners or employers, internal verification and the course review
- be an 'inclusive' process that involves all stakeholders involved in the training process - learners, staff, employers and other agencies and interested parties e.g. community partners who have helped to plan programmes, providers who provide progression opportunities for your learners, specialist agencies who offer support for your learners and employers who have provided work placements
- involve everyone from the start of the process, not just to comment on the finished draft report - 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down - and focusing on issues which will really make a difference to learners
- be well communicated and used in staff development days to train staff and have them work together in their teams, to bring evidence together and form judgements
- use a panel of staff, learners and employers as 'critical friends' for moderation of proposed grades as a final 'quality check'.

The Report should:

- have a structure which is similar to that of inspection reports, using the same grading scale and headings as that used by inspectors and include other sections such as health and safety if required by other funders
- be rigorous, addressing all the questions in the Common Inspection Framework, encompassing all areas of the institution and sub-contracted provision and focus on the learner’s experience and the standards they achieve



- be honest and objective in making judgements about strengths and areas for improvement, so that the organisation is recognisable to all staff (Inspectors will take a poor view of ‘glossy’ statements that are far from the reality they find)

- have statements about <u>norms</u> too, which are the satisfactory aspects of the provision that are deemed not to be strengths or areas for improvement of the provision, but are doing what is expected

- have evaluative language in statements about judgements, so that aspects are not just described and it is clear what is the basis for judging a strength or a weakness
- contain hard evidence to support each judgement and indicating where it is located and using performance data (for example retention and achievement data, results of Lesson Observation etc.) to substantiate judgements
- be clearly linked to an improvement action plan where all strengths and areas for improvement are addressed
- be an easy document for the organisation to use as a guide for their planning and for staff to see what needs to change, so it should not be too long.

The Report Structure should have:

- an introduction, outlining the scope of the contract and the social and economic context of the local area
- a grid of the grades you have given yourselves
- a brief explanation of how you have managed the self-assessment process
- a clear descriptor of how the centre is meeting the needs of learners and other users overall, with judgements and evidence of strengths and areas for improvement and a grade for overall effectiveness; this pulls together a complete picture of what you have already stated in

later sections relating to the key questions in the CIF - achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management

- judgements on your capacity to improve, based on what you have already stated in later sections on leadership and management and how you have managed quality assurance and quality improvement; include what impact any improvements have had on the learner experience and success rates and on your view of the accuracy of the report. (If you have produced an SAR and been inspected previously, you should include the progress made in relation to your previous quality improvement plan)
- sections on equality of opportunity and safeguarding, which are important grades as any areas for improvement here **will limit the grade** for overall effectiveness, even if everything else is good or better
- a section on Quality Improvement, which does not have a separate grade
- sections on each area of learning, covering achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management if there are differences in leadership between areas of learning
- an organisation chart
- your Quality Improvement Plan (in an Appendix if you wish).

A Template has been included for you in Appendix 4.3 which contains more detailed guidance and information for you to follow for each section, plus there is further advice below in Writing the Sections

Section 4.2: Writing The Sections

For each of the sections, follow the guidance in the relevant section in the Template in Appendix 4.3. We are also offering advice here for some of the sections which perhaps need more explanation.

Sections 1- 4 and 6 are best completed after you have written other sections because they are dealing with overall judgements and grading and so depend on the outcomes of the later sections.

So perhaps a good place to start would be **Section 5 – the Self Assessment Process** and if you like, you could do what some providers do and put this section immediately after the Introduction.

This section is about explaining how you have set about the whole process. The Quality Manager is usually responsible for leading the process and completing the final document, but you must describe how everyone else has been involved – how you collected evidence from all your monitoring and evaluation activities, how you included staff and other stakeholders in making the judgements and grading and in contributing to the writing of the document. The examples given on the Ofsted and LSIS websites of poor Self Assessments are always those where it is clear one person has conducted the whole process themselves. This invariably means they are not making accurate judgements as no one person can know everything that goes on in an organisation (even though many managers think they do !) Follow the guidance in the Template.

Then go on to **Section 7 – Quality of Provision.** Use the questions in **Appendix 4.1** Section B, to guide you on what to say regarding the quality of provison, as well as the notes in the Template in **Appendix 4.3**.

Next do Sections 9, 10 and 11 - Follow the guidance on the Template in **Appendix 4.3**.

For **Section 8 – Leadership and Management**

Good leadership is seen as stimulating change, improvement and innovation, through high expectations coupled with support – the tough and the tender – for all learners and staff. The Board should also display good leadership too, in the way it establishes and maintains a good relationship with the organisation's leaders and supports the direction and planning for the future.

This means that leaders have to deal with other aspects that impact on the learner's outcomes as well as the curriculum, such as effectively managing financial and human resources to ensure safety, honouring diversity, providing equal opportunities and assuring quality across the piece to bring about improvements in standards and achievement.

Use the questions in the same Appendix 4.1 to guide what you want to say about the leadership and management of the organisation. Remember that there are separate sections for Equality of Opportunity, Safeguarding and Quality Improvement which contribute to the Leadership and Management grade, (altough Quality Improvement does not have a grade). That is why we recommend that you do these first, as they answer many of the questions and considerations for Leadership and Management.

For Section 12 – Quality Improvement

You will need to describe here the systems you have set up to capture data about student numbers, retention, achievement, equality and budget information. You need to explain how tutors gather personal data from learners at induction, how attendance sheets are used, how achievement is recorded and how this data is held and updated e.g. on an excel spreadsheet and updated weekly.

You should also describe how the results of monitoring and evaluation procedures such as the course review, lesson observations, learner progress reviews, learner and staff surveys, other feedback from learners or employers and internal verification are held and updated. You might explain how and with what regularity data gets analysed, how the outcomes are reported and what is fed back to whom. It is important to show that staff regularly examine the data to look for trends, what may need quick improvements and where problems may arise in future. Make sure you always produce and collect together for evidence, agendas and minutes of all meetings, to demonstrate effective communication.

You must be able to demonstrate your commitment to improving quality and so include mention of training or support for staff to bring about improvements in systems and practices, what discussions or meetings take place to consider how to address retention, achievement, recruitment and financial issues.

Also, explain what actions you take to seek out and transfer good practice and what activities you arrange to recognise staff and learner contributions and to celebrate success. .

You don’t need to write pages here – try and do it in just one or two, enough to leave the reader confident that you have a thorough, regular process of looking at your learning delivery and assessing it to see if the quality of learning is high and benefits the learners.

For Section 13 – Subject Sector Areas

Follow the instructions for this Section in in the Template in **Appendix 4.3.**

A list of the official Subject Sector areas is included in **Appendix 4.4**

We suggest that you go back now and complete sections 1 – 4 and section 6. Again, follow the guidance in the Template.

For Section 14 –Organisational Chart

Insert your Oranisational Chart

For Section 15 – Quality Improvement Plan

Insert your completed Quality Improvement Plan

See an example of a plan in **Appendix 4.2** (but this must be customised for your own centre)

See below for two good practice examples from the LSIS Excellence Gateway included for you in the Appendices:

APPENDIX 4.5: is from a Grade 3 provider: Inner London Training in 2005

APPENDIX 4.6: is an actual SAR from 2008 for a Grade 1 provider ZENOS.

APPENDIX 4.7: is a useful checklist to help you assess your own SAR.

For further help go to LSIS Excellence Gateway **www.excellencegateway.org.uk** and browse the Resources section

And go to the Ofsted website **http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/** and use the search facility for Self Assessment

Health Check

Have the key strengths been identified or are they really normal practice?

Have you identified normal practice ('norms') to show what is satisfactory?

Have you been honest in identifying the major areas for improvement that impact on learners?

Have you made judgements (how good or bad an aspect is) rather than describe what is in place?

Have judgement been made on all the key questions of the Common Inspection Framework?

What evidence are your judgements based on (performance data, observations, outside views)?

Are your self-assessment grades consistent with the balance of strengths, norms and areas for improvement (one strength and three areas for improvement rarely reflect good provision)?

Who has been involved in developing the self-assessment report (does it reflect the views of all those involved in the delivery of training)?

Do staff have a sense of ownership of the report (a 'bottom-up' process)?

Do staff know the grades and key judgements for their area and other key areas such as leadership and management and equality of opportunity?

Do staff recognise the organisation that they work in from the report?

Have you moderated the proposed grades in any way?

Does the report reflect the progress that you have made in improving areas for improvement since your last inspection?

Section 5: Framework for Excellence

From September 2010, after national pilots have been completed, all providers funded by the LSC must comply with the requirements of the Framework For Excellence (FFE). (See www.ffe.lsc.gov.uk for the provder guide)

The Framework is commissioned by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Its other sponsors include LSC, Ofsted, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ACDS).

The FFE is formed from a set of performance indicators that cover aspects of a college's or provider's provision such as;

- success rates;
- views of learners and employers;
- learner destinations; and
- finance.

Together, these indicators provide an independent and quantitative assessment of performance of individual providers and of the sector as a whole.

Performance of providers is assessed annually and scored against national standards with scores and grades available for each performance indicator where applicable. Framework outputs will be calculated and published on an annual cycle.

During 2009/10, the Framework will be piloted in school sixth forms and local authorities and implemented across the whole post-16 sector, subject to the outcome of the Pilot from September 2010 onwards.

Although the requirements will not apply until then it is essential all data records of the indicated aspects should be retained leading up to 2010/11. If the methods used in the pilots are rolled out, the ffe inspectors will not observe processes but will make judgements merely on the centre data and the judgements already made in the Self Assessment Report.

The structure of the requirements is in Appendix 5

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We do hope that you have found this Resource Pack useful, as an accessible source of best practice guidance and are able to put it to use within your organisation.

Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you would like to share your examples of best practice with us, or you would like to see any additional material in the pack.

We wish you every success with your endeavours.

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