

THE PROVIDER INSIDER

INSIGHTS INTO FURTHER EDUCATION

AN INTERVIEW WITH WOODSPEEN

This edition of the provider insider brings you an interview with a WYLP members & Board Director, Woodspeen Training on their experiences with Ofsted and the new EIF following their inspection in September. We hope this will give you a good insight & help you prepare.

FIRSTLY, HOW YOU FEELING POST INSPECTION?

Exhausted! We are thoroughly pleased with how the inspection went, we felt the process was fair and we had ample opportunity to provide evidence of our strengths.

HOW DIFFERENT WAS THE NOMINEE ROLE?

It is still a very demanding role, and in some ways requires even more knowledge of what goes on in the business. Because there is no longer an endless fascination with achievement rates, the nominee needs less reliance on data and more knowledge of the structures and delivery of the curriculum.

KEY DIFFERENCES DURING INSPECTION – DID DAY 1 FEEL DIFFERENT, WHAT ABOUT FEEDBACK SESSIONS?

Day 1 was a similar format, but different content. The provider presentation is very much focussed on "intent", why we deliver, what we deliver, who we deliver to how we deliver it. Providers need a very clear understanding of their business strategy and it's intent but must of all be confident that staff know and understand it as well.

Feedback was similar, although is now uploaded by technology and reviewed during the feedback sessions. It is similar in so much as it identifies emerging strengths and weaknesses, but they don't grade visits or use the old terminology such as "good" or "outstanding". You get a clear picture of how you are doing on Quality of Education, but feedback on Personal Development and Behaviours and Attitudes was a little more fragmented so the Nominee needs to really tune in to get a view on how these are being judged.

An important meeting on the 2nd and 3rd days is the planning meeting at the beginning of the day. This is when the Nominee can really make a difference by asking for inspectors to see areas that will build on emerging strengths and dispel some emerging weaknesses. To do this though the nominee needs to have a deep understanding of not just the tutor, but the curriculum and even what the likely views of the learners will be!

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Impact!! The focus on what difference our provision makes to learners careers and lives was paramount to whole process. We did what I think many providers do, learner surveys, exit interviews and destinations surveys at 3 and 6 months. But that simply wasn't good enough. We didn't have the evidence of the impact our training had on our learners; which was very frustrating because we had lots of anecdotal evidence, good news stories etc. and we genuinely believe we do a good job, but couldn't systematically prove it well enough. To give this some context, our Adult provision has a 98.4% Success Rate in 19-20 and we got hammered for "impact"!!

LOTS OF TALK ON DEEP DIVES BY INSPECTORS – WHAT'S YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE?

We liked the deep dive, but I'm not sure it will suit all providers. I know it's over simplistic but in the previous regime if your QAR was above benchmark and Inspectors saw a good lesson, you were largely home and dry. With the Deep Dive there is no hiding place; senior leaders, middle managers and tutors have all got to have a really good understanding of the curriculum and learners, why we deliver it, where it leads to, employer needs, curriculum structure etc. And if that is not enough, they look extensively at learner work and speak to many more learners than they used to. We reckon they spoke with well over 150 of our learners. It is much harder to stage manage the inspection, the deep dive is just too immersed.



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WHAT YOU ENJOYED OR LIKED MOST ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE?

I was really proud of our learners, the motivation and passion they demonstrated to Inspectors was great to see, as a provider we know we don't get everything right first time, but the feedback from learners on how support them was genuinely fantastic.

WHAT YOU'D DO DIFFERENTLY IN PLANNING AND FUTURE QIP'S ?

I think three things

- Impact will be the new big thing! We will certainly focus on how what we do impacts our learners, beyond getting them a qualification.
- Feedback mechanisms are also important, there was a acknowledgement from our Inspection team that we wouldn't get everything right, but they wanted to see clear evidence that we had spotted where things were not working and made changes necessary so the next learner would get a better experience and impact!
- Consistency is also key, if you read the EIF to get the highest grades inspectors need to see excellence in all areas; which was frustrating for us.

It is interesting to note that the previous inspection report, SAR and QIP were hardly referenced in our inspection at all, I think the Deep Dive methodology places little reliance on these documents and forms its own opinions.

HOW DIFFERENT WAS THE EXPERIENCE FOR STAFF?

Very different. Middle Managers / Curriculum Leaders need to be absolutely on the ball in their understanding of their curriculum, employers, staff and learners. For tutors it is a totally different experience, they are no longer "observed", Inspectors interact with them and learners during teaching sessions, asking why topics are being delivered, whether learners understand what they are being taught, what they learnt last week etc. We found most staff preferred the new format as it gave them the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and experience more.

HOW DIFFERENT FOR LEARNERS AND EMPLOYERS?

Much more different in terms of they spoke with so many more learners and employers; and the focus was how the programme was moving them on their business or careers. There is however still a significant focus on whether learners feel safe and ensuring we are embedding British values.

WHAT DIDN'T YOU EXPECT?

After the initial Provider presentation there was very little in terms of Leadership and Management that took place with leaders. They really did judge L&M from testing what we said at the start in the field – which can be scary! The focus on impact was a significant shift, as was the number of learners they interviewed.

WORDS OF ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Really focus on the 3 I's, if you get those right the rest will fall into place. BUT if you are running programmes for the wrong reasons and not adding value to learners beware, the Deep Dive is likely to find you out!

3 WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE

Positive, challenging, pride.

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