

**WEBINAR**

2 October 2025

# The New Ofsted Framework – Differences & Implications



**Rebecca Rhodes, Associate Director, UVAC**

**Rebecca Perry-Tomlinson, His Majesty's Inspector & Specialist Advisor**

**Further Education and Skills Policy, Ofsted**

**Sian Cooke, Ofsted**

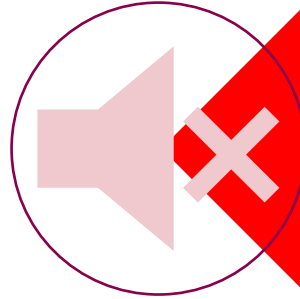
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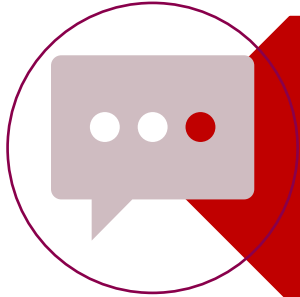
# Welcome!



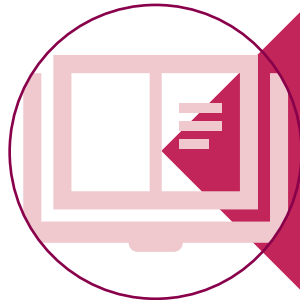
There are documents for you to download in the 'Materials' or 'Handouts' tab in your toolbar



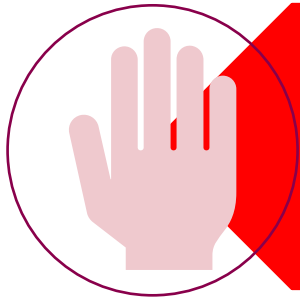
You are on mute at the start but can unmute yourselves at any point



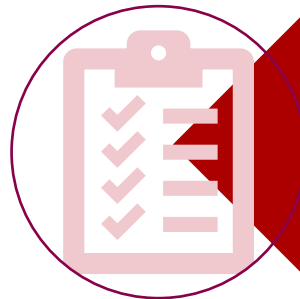
The chat is open to everyone



Please stay on at the end for the feedback survey



Select the Hand icon to raise your hand or hover over 'React' for other icons



Resources are available through links in the resources slide/slide pack

UNIVERSITY  
OF  
VIRGINIA

## Learning from the first batch / pilots

## Employers

## EDI

## Training and capacity

## Communication

## Grades

- 1.How to make best use of the additional planning time. Can you give us any summary of what has been particularly useful for us to either:
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# Questions & Themes for Ofsted

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# The New Ofsted Framework – Differences & Implications



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# UVAC Update / Today's session

## Ofsted/UVAC Partnership

- Regular Meetings
- Input into Ofsted inspector training
- Vehicle for Q and A and wider queries – please raise these with me by email at any time

## Inspector Training

- Lead Inspectors training 8/9 Jan
- UVAC Recorded an HE Apprenticeship Overview for this
- This covered: challenges facing HE in delivery, priorities and points for the lead inspectors to be aware of
- Also new 1/4 ly communities of practice updates
- Asked to explain apprenticeship governance

## Today's Session

- Ofsted do not want their session recorded and don't want to share their slides either – a summary of slides is included
- A summary of this part of the webinar is at <https://uvac.ac.uk/webinar/ofsted-updates/>
- Their input was requested on:
  - EDI and how this is demonstrated
  - Inspector Training
  - Learning from the pilots
  - They want to cover Monitoring

# Agenda

**1 The Framework Differences, Impact, Challenges**

**2 Actions & Mitigations**

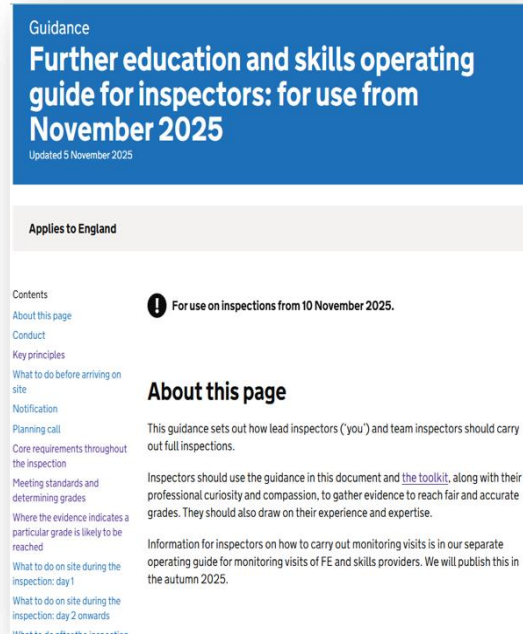
**3 Break**

**4 Ofsted Update & Q and A**

**5 Resources & Future Ofsted Sessions**

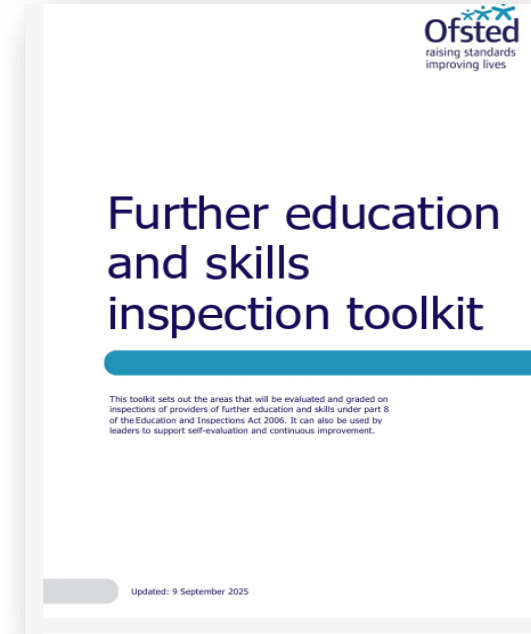


# Core Documents



## Ofsted Operating guide for FE and skills inspections:

- How inspectors carry out full inspections
- what inspectors do during an inspection
- Who inspectors engage with and how
- How inspectors feed back to leaders
- How findings are reported



## FE and skills Inspection Toolkit

- The standards inspectors use to evaluate provision
- Guidance on applying them across different provider types,

# Core Documentation

## **FE and skills** **inspection operating** **guide**

- A step-by-step guide for inspectors on how to inspect an FE and skills provider

## **FE and skills** **inspection toolkit**

- What inspectors and providers use to discuss the quality of provision on inspection

## **Information** **about FE and skills** **inspections**

- For provider staff and leaders, parents and carers and the wider public

## **FE and skills** **monitoring operating** **guide**

- Guidance for inspectors on how to monitor FE and skills providers



# Three Key Principles for Lead Inspectors

## Principle 1

- Throughout the inspection, the toolkit will help you to gather evidence to celebrate the provider's strengths, validate leaders' priorities and progress and highlight where improvement is needed.
- In doing so, you will consider the extent to which learners and apprentices:
  - achieve – academically and personally
  - belong – feel that they belong to and are valued as part of the provider community
  - thrive – benefit from the right systems, processes and levels of oversight, so that they are kept safe and are able to flourish, and/or fulfil their potential, whatever their background or individual needs

These prompts align closely with the evaluation areas in the toolkit and will give you assurance that you are building a clear and typical picture of all aspects of the provider's work.

## Principle 2

- Leadership, inclusion and whether there is an open and positive safeguarding culture are key areas of focus when gathering evidence.

## Principle 3

- The 'expected standard' in the evaluation areas in the toolkit is the starting point for planning your inspection activities

1.

# The Key Framework Differences



# Key Differences



1. Multiple & New Gradings



2. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Criteria



3. Use of Data and Comparators



4. Achievement Criteria



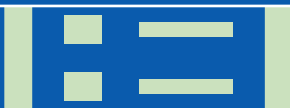
5. Notification & Planning - 5/6 Days Notice



6. Planning Call Scope

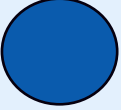


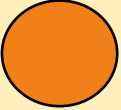
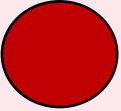


7. Case Sampling



8. Report & Report Card

# 1. Multiple Grades, No Single Judgement, No Map to Previous Grades

Icon	Title	Definition
	<b>Exceptional</b>	Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.
	<b>Strong standard</b>	The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standards expected of them.
	<b>Expected standard</b>	The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them
	<b>Needs attention</b>	The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.
	<b>Urgent improvement</b>	The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

# Grading Structure

## **A: 'Institution Level' Grades:**

- 0. Safeguarding [met/not met]
- Inclusion, Leadership & Governance:
  - 1. Inclusion
  - 2. Leadership & Governance

## **B: Each 'Programme Area' Grades e.g. Apprenticeships:**

- 1. Achievement
- 2. Curriculum & Teaching
- 3. Participation & Development

## **C: Narrative:**

- What its like to be a learner and /or an apprentice at this provider
- Next steps

## **D: Facts & Figures used in this Inspection:**

- No. Learners
- Percentage or Learning Aims Successfully Achieved
  - Overall Achievement Rate Compared with National Average
- Pass Rate

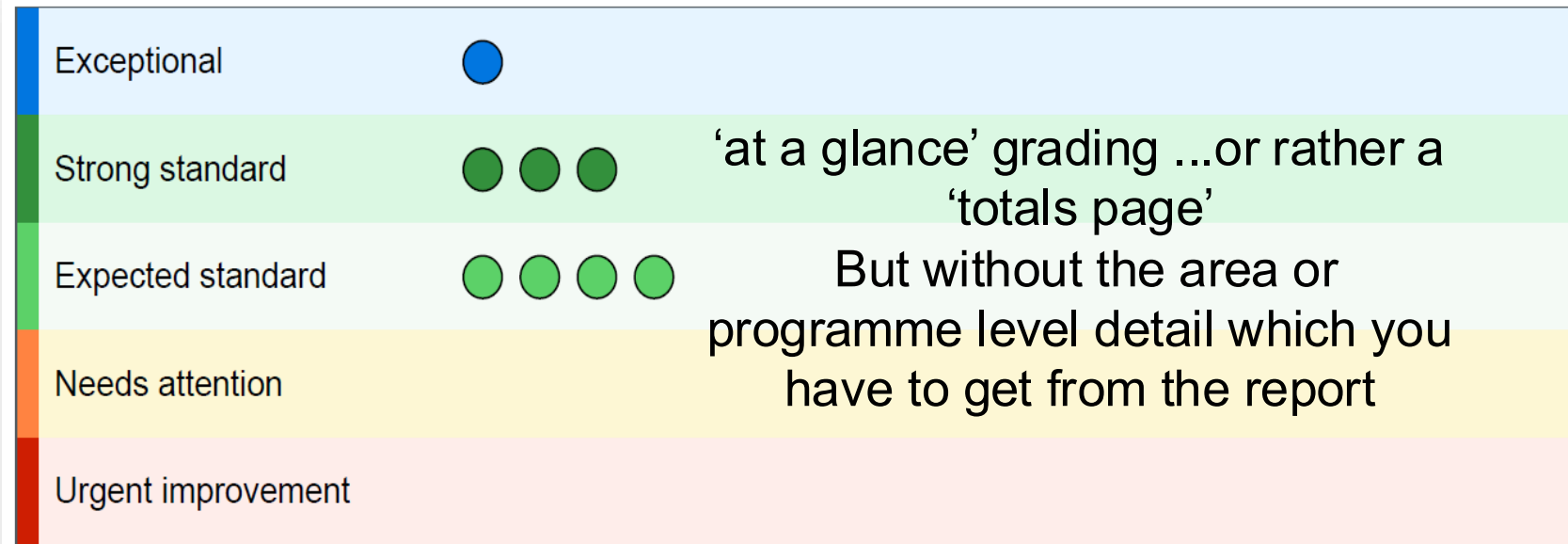
# Front Page Report Card & Gratings

All providers have 6 Grades minimum\*:

- 3 from Cat A: Safeguarding, Inclusion, Leadership & Governance
- Multiples of Cat B: so 3 for every programme type in scope: Achievement, Curriculum & Teaching, Participation & Development

\* Plus Contribution to meeting skills needs:









- Exceptional
- Strong standard
- Expected standard
- Needs attention
- Urgent improvement




✓ **Safeguarding standards met**


# Front Page Report Card & Gradings

## Inspection report: 11 November 2025


Exceptional	
Strong standard	  
Expected standard	   
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

► [Our grades explained](#)


 **Safeguarding standards met**

 [Show](#)


**1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance**

 [Show](#)

**2. Adult learning programmes**

 [Show](#)

**3. Apprenticeships**

 [Show](#)

# What we know about the first batch of reports

## Summary

- 19 against the new framework
- 1 'exceptional' grade for Adult Learning Achievement
- 1 Needs Attention on all areas
- Some 'strong' grades

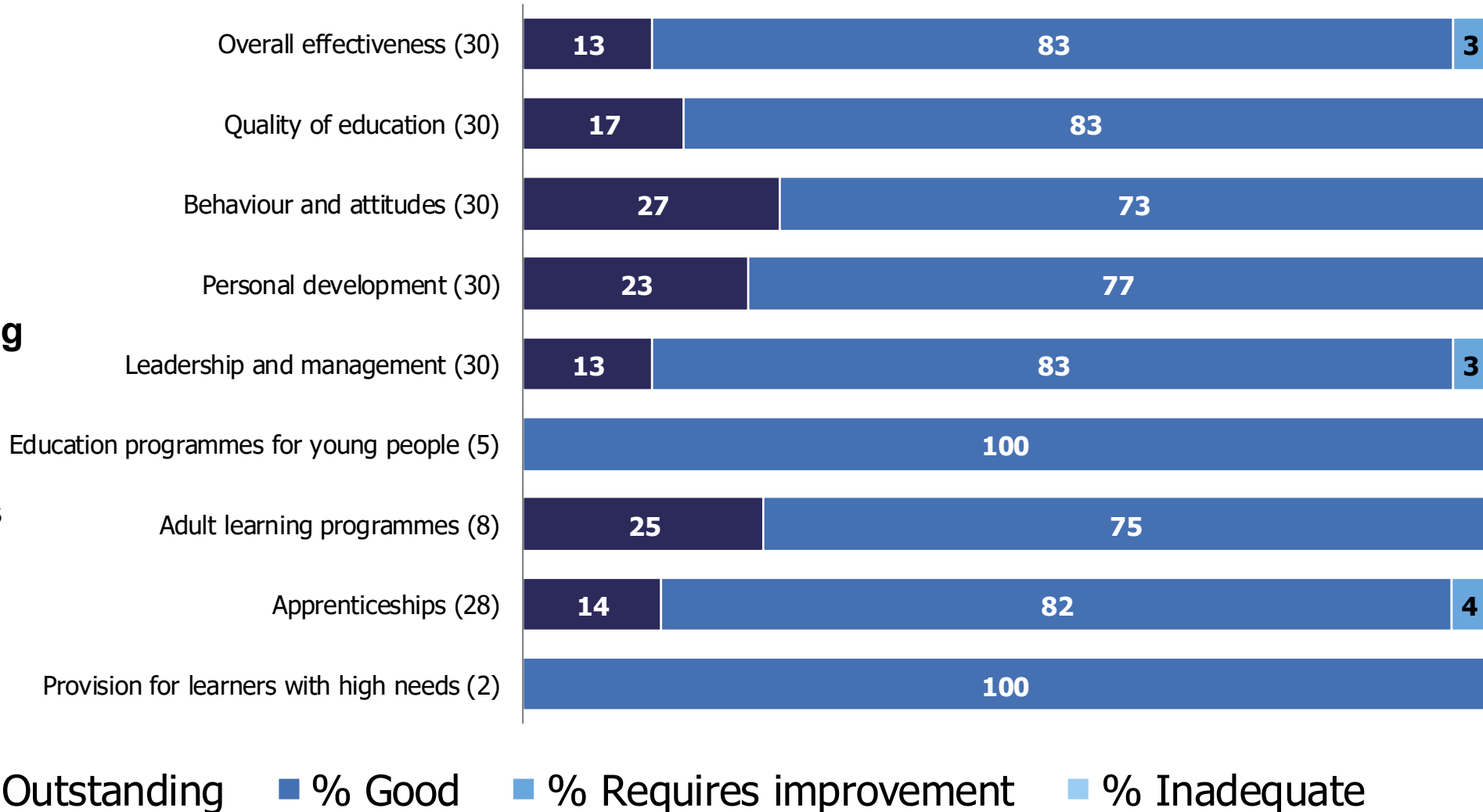
## Online Report Format

- Only shows the dashboard- and not what each rating is for
- Painful to work out what the grades relate to
- Painful to quickly compare
- Insufficient search criteria



# Pattern of Outcomes under the 'old' Framework for HEIs

**88% of FE and skills providers hold either 'good' or 'outstanding' – a 6 percentage point rise on the previous year.'**



## 2. Equality, Diversity, Inclusion-'breaking down barriers to learning and wellbeing'

### Barriers

- Breaking down barriers for:
  - Disadvantaged
  - SEND
  - Individuals experiencing challenges to learning
- Whether services are effective
- Whether leadership decisions are effective in mitigating these

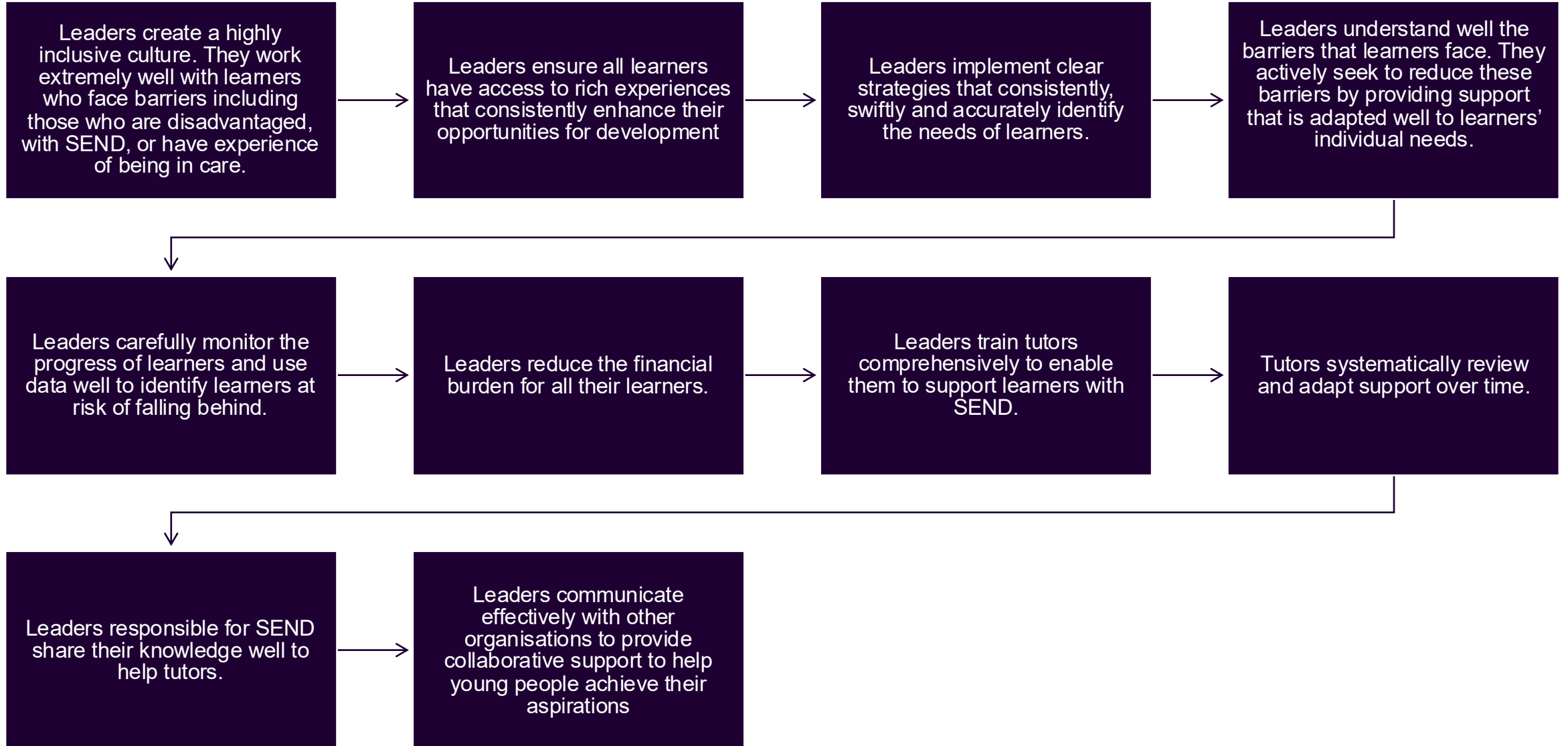
### Context

- Understanding who your learner communities are
- What challenges learners face
- Whether services are effective
- Whether leadership decisions are effective in mitigating these

### Integrated

- Understanding how inclusion is embedded throughout delivery in the context of every provider's mix
- This will be explored through:
  - Data
  - Case sampling and learning walks

# Equality, Diversity, Inclusion – ‘Strong’



# Equality, Diversity, Inclusion – examples of ‘Needs Attention’

- Leaders have only recently sought out specialist expertise to understand fully and support apprentices’ individual needs. Their processes to record and review the support they provide to apprentices, who have declared special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at enrolment, are not effective enough.
- However, it is too early to fully appreciate how leaders will use this information to plan individualised support for apprentices.
- Teachers make some appropriate adjustments to remove barriers to learning. For example, they provide extra one-to-one meetings, additional teaching sessions, and allow more time for assignment submission.

Leaders have not fully developed their inclusion strategy. While they support apprentices who need extra help, they rely too heavily on previous assessments of need to develop support strategies.

- Leaders have identified appropriate training for senior leaders and have explored ways of providing specialist assessment and support for apprentices’ learning needs. However, they have not provided training for mentors or tutors to extend their understanding of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, nor how to assess, plan and accurately review these apprentices’ progress.


# 3. Use of Data - a focus on comparative position

- **Information released to providers and inspectors which underpins inspection activity via a portal called the Further Education and Skills Inspection Tool (FESIT). It is open and accessible all year round**
- **Data is only the starting point for inspection - grading decisions are not made on the basis of data alone**
- **FESIT is an inspection tool maintained and built by Ofsted - working closely with DfE and ESFA to replicate the calculations they apply to your data, for example calculating the qualification achievement rates (QARs). - always check your own data too**
- **The data portal is intended to be a one-stop-shop for inspectors when preparing for inspections..**
- **New data is updated in FESIT whenever it becomes available, which ranges from a monthly basis for some data sets to annually for others.**
- **‘You are not expected to look at or use this tool to prepare for an inspection’. You will not be judged on your knowledge of its content on inspection. ‘We are simply sharing to be transparent’.**

# 3/4Comparative Achievement Position Data

### Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 11 November 2025

### Number of learners

Total learners

**394**

Adult learning programmes

**49**

Apprenticeships

**345**

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved			
Apprenticeships overall achievement rate			
Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	74	61	Above
2022/23	66	55	Above
2021/22	53	53	Close to average
Apprenticeships pass rate			
Year	This provider	National average	
2023/24	99	98	
2022/23	100	97	
2021/22	100	98	

# How the Data is used:

Identify where providers sit within the national distribution:

- explore patterns in learner outcomes over time, compared to national averages
- multiple years/measures identify patterns and emerging trends

Allocate banding depending the national distribution range:

- 'close to average' 'above average' 'below average'.

Look for analysis of statistical significance:

- Reasons for these and the leadership decisions that have driven it, are explored while on site

Explore the right balance

- Mix between published data and on-site inspection activity – is not fixed
- It shifts depending on the context

Data is used to shape the inspection and answer the questions the data has raised :

- For planning calls
- Shaping conversations with leaders
- In inspection design

# Achievement - Strong standard (Apprenticeships)

- A very high proportion of apprentices achieve their apprenticeship, with around a third achieving distinctions. Achievement of English and mathematics qualifications is also high
- Most apprentices pass their examinations at the first attempt.
- Apprentices make extensive progress from their starting points and produce work of a very high standard.
- They acquire the extensive knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for employment and to fulfil their future career aspirations.
- Apprentices have a positive impact on their employers' businesses. Employers highly value apprentices who use their proficiency to enhance workplace practices and pioneer new approaches.
- Apprentices secure sustained employment, with many gaining promotions or moving on to higher-level training.



# Achievement - Exceptional (Adult Learning)

- Learners, including those with barriers to learning, achieve highly ambitious career goals in the logistics sector. They consistently make extensive progress from their starting points.
- Training has a transformational impact on learners' future careers and employability prospects, and on their employers' businesses. For example, learners facing redundancy have rapidly gained the skills needed to secure employment in driving large goods vehicles.
- Learners quickly develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to become highly confident and competent professional drivers.
- They demonstrate very high-quality practical driving skills that meet exacting regulatory standards. Learners are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in the transport and logistics industry. Almost all learners progress into sustained employment.
- Learners quickly improve their English, mathematical and digital skills. They develop strong communication skills that enable them to interact effectively with customers and passengers. They accurately complete calculations on fuel savings and the working time directive.

# 5/6/7. Notification & Planning Calls

## 5/6 days notice

- Time to discuss and brief staff
- Time to brief employers
- Time to build a clear 'context' and evidence base

## Collaborative Planning

- May be up to 3 video calls. Inspectors ready with latest data
- Want to work with leaders to understand context
- Exchange of documentation and data

## Clear Shared Starting Point

- Asked to self rate and talk through priorities for improvement
- Establish positive 'shared' approach to the inspection time
- Agree focus areas, sampling and learning walks

# Impact & Mitigations....Freeing Yourself (and others) from OFCA\*...

Old Framework Comparison Anxiety



# 1. Grading Changes = Managing Comparison Anxiety.....

**‘Is ‘expected’ the new ‘satisfactory’ with a dash of ‘good’? Or do we now expect good, so ‘expected’ is simply average? Similarly, is ‘strong’ the top end of good with a sprinkling of ‘outstanding’?**

**To make matters worse, the new ‘secure fit’ approach means that if even one sub-judgement ‘needs attention’”, the overall outcome could be pulled down. In other words, you could be strong in everything but one area and still end up with a negative headline.**

**That doesn’t feel like “less pressure” to me – quite the opposite.**

**But the immediate issue is communication. How do we, as providers, describe ourselves now? How do we reassure stakeholders, parents, funders and partners about our quality without that simple, universally understood grade?’**

# Let Go of the Old Framework:

## 1 – Why Comparison Feels Inevitable

- Inspection grades affect reputation, funding, morale and recruitment
- The old framework became our shared mental model of “what good looks like”
- When the rules change, uncertainty increases and people look backwards
- Ofsted says grades are “not comparable” – but our brains want a reference point

## 2 – Comparison Gets in the Way

- You cannot implement a new system while thinking in the old one
- Old language, old evidence habits, old reassurance patterns persist
- Energy goes into “What would we have been before?”
- Instead of “What does strong practice now look like?”

## 3. Move From Proving Compliance to Showing Impact

### Old emphasis:

- Processes, documentation, consistency, thresholds

### New emphasis:

- Lived experience of apprentices
- Outcomes for different groups
- Inclusion, belonging and equity as a golden thread
- **Quality as impact, not just intention**

# Moving On: The old framework was about proving compliance. The new one is about proving impact and equity.

## Reframe: Stop comparing, start translating

**From** - “Where would we have got under the old framework?”

**To:** “What is the new framework *really trying to see* about our provision?”

**Intent** – What does Ofsted now care most about?

1. Learner experience over process

2. Inclusion, belonging, outcomes for *all* groups

**3. Evidence** – What behaviours and data now matter most?

**4. Narrative** – How you tell your quality story

## ‘unlearn & Relearn’

**Ask what needs to stop / Start / Continue” for Inspection Thinking**

- What inspection habits need to **STOP**?
  - Assuming ‘average is good enough’?
  - Treating EDI as a separate theme rather than a golden thread?
  - What needs to **START**?
  - Using learner voice continuously
  - Segmenting outcomes by groups
  - More granular EDI information collection ?
  - Coaching staff to talk confidently about inclusion in practice
  - What can **CONTINUE**?
  - Strong curriculum intent
  - Safeguarding culture
  - Employer engagement
- From nostalgia to action

# Demonstrating Equality Diversity & Inclusion

What does the Framework want us to demonstrate ?

## **Build a “golden thread of EDI”**

Not only a policy – a story:

- How do different groups:
  - Access the programme?
  - Experience teaching and support?
  - Progress and achieve?
  - Feel they belong?

Map apprentice characteristics

Map each stage of the apprentice journey

- Ask: *Where might this work well for some but not others?*
- Look at apprentice feedback, look at demographic data – what does this indicate might be challenges
- Look for differences
- Check that feedback is that the support works
- Add EDI training – identification, intervention, response –SEND leads into your mandatory learning checks

# Supporting Transition – employers and commissioners

- Update employer briefing notes
- Emphasise what is new and positive
- Talk to employer groups about what matters and is simple to digest

Employer  
Confusion/Apathy



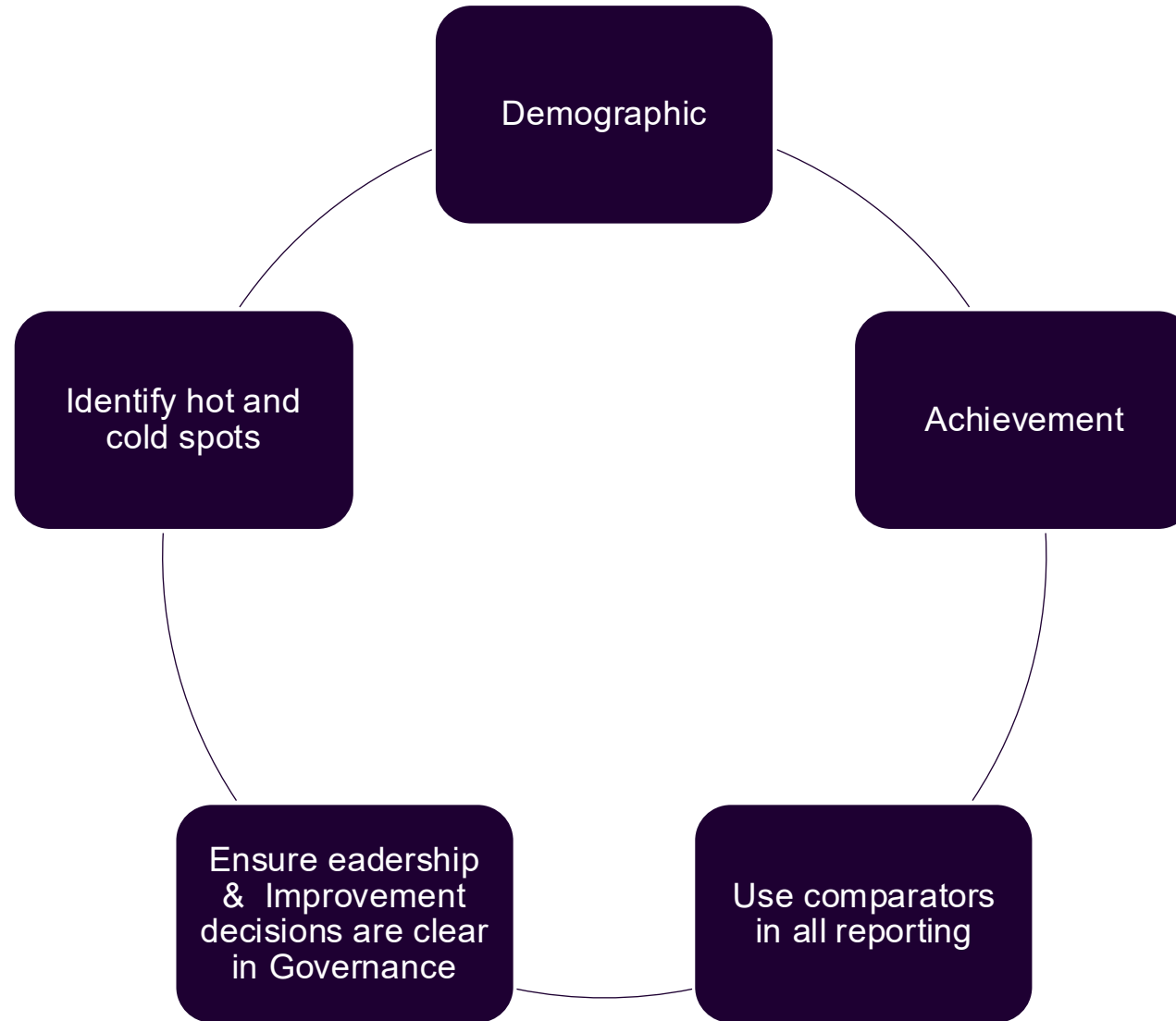
- How will employers, stakeholders, bidding organisations judge 'quality' now ?
- Talk to Stakeholders
- Look for a transition period

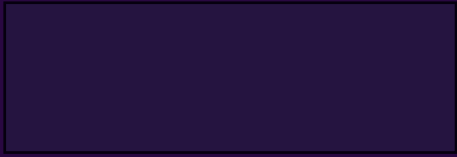
Commissioning





# Know your data and how your provision is responding





# Ofsted Questions

FAQ can be found at <https://uvac.ac.uk/ofsted-updates/>

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# Questions & Themes for Ofsted

# TEA BREAK



**Ofsted Update** – Ofsted requested that their input was not recorded and that their slides were not shared. The following slides are a summary of their slide pack

**You can Access the summary of their session on the UVAC resources pages**  
**<https://uvac.ac.uk/webinar/ofsted-updates/>**

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# Ofsted Slides Summary

## Key changes

- Removal of overall effectiveness grade
- New toolkit
- Shift from “best fit” to “secure fit”
- Introduction of a report card

## Report card – evaluation areas

- Leadership and governance\*
- Inclusion\*
- Safeguarding\*
- Contribution to meeting skills needs\*\*  
(\*all providers,  
\*\*colleges/6th form/specialist only)

## Grading scale (provision types)

- Exceptional
- Strong
- Expected standard
- Needs attention
- Urgent improvement
- Safeguarding: Met / Not met

## Funded provision types graded

- Education programmes for young people
- Adult learning programmes
- Apprenticeships
- High needs provision

# Ofsted Slides Summary

## Quality areas judged

- . Curriculum, teaching and training
- . Achievement
- . Participation and development

## Frequency of grades

- . Most common grades expected:
  - Exceptional to Expected standard
- . Five-point scale with indicators and standards

## 8. Less frequent grades

- . Needs attention
- . Urgent improvement
- . Secure-fit judgement against standards

## 9. Decoupling from EIF

- . No comparison with old EIF grades
- . Secure fit replaces best fit

# Ofsted Slides Summary

## **Inclusion focus (provider & provision level)**

- . Strengthened evaluation of inclusion in FE & Skills

## **How inclusion is evaluated**

- . Dialogue with leaders, learners, apprentices
- . Use of contextual data
- . Case sampling
- . Learning walks



# Ofsted Slides Summary

## Key changes

- Case sampling
- Learning walks
- Inspection focus areas
- New report card
- 5–6 days' notice (not 2)
- Strengthened inclusion focus
- “Expected standard” is baseline

## Key changes

- Shadow nominee option
- 4-year inspection cycle
- Revised monitoring
- Skills needs now a standalone grade

## Collective aims

- High-quality inclusive education
- Strong outcomes
- Better information for employers/parents
- Collaborative inspection
- Rising standards

## How inspections will feel different

- More contextualised
- More collaborative
- Consistent approach
- Clear improvement recommendations
- Continued wellbeing focus

# Ofsted Slides Summary

## Planning the inspection

- Three-part planning calls
- Agree context and priorities
- Set focus areas
- Plan case sampling
- Identify learning walks

## Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

- Selected by Lead Inspector
- Can be:
  - Courses
  - Learner groups
  - Aspects of provision
  - Toolkit themes

## Learning walks

- Three joint walks
- Focus on:
  - Inclusion
  - Curriculum/teaching/achievement
  - Leadership
- “Tell us, then show us”

## Case sampling

- Evidence from real learner/apprentice journeys
- Sample agreed in planning calls
- Normally two learners per inspector
- Selected from groups including:
  - SEND
  - Disadvantaged
  - Looked-after
  - Known to social care
  - Other barriers
- Sample confirmed on Day 1
- Activities include:
  - Observations
  - Learner interviews
  - Staff discussions
  - Review of support and EHC plans

# Ofsted Slides Summary

## Toolkit structure

- Each evaluation area contextualised by provision type

## Monitoring inspections – purpose

- Improve grades for:
  - Urgent improvement
  - Needs attention
  - Safeguarding not met
- Assigned HMI
- New providers graded on 4 progress themes
- Up to 5 days' notice

## Types of monitoring inspection

- 1.Urgent improvement / safeguarding
- 2.Needs attention
- 3.New providers
- 4.Newly merged colleges
- 5.Focused monitoring

## Legacy monitoring

- Applies to RI/Inadequate providers pre-Oct 2025
- Timescales unchanged

## Report cards

- Clear, accessible summaries
- Colour-coded (red to blue)
- Evaluation area detail
- Constructive next steps
- Web and social media links

# Resources



# Next STEPS



**Webcast Link [HERE](#)**



**Slides and Resources [HERE](#)  
FAQ uploaded and updated  
monthly**



**Queries and Questions to:  
[R.Rhodes@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:R.Rhodes@bolton.ac.uk)**



**Next Webinars – April & July**

Section	Timestamp
The Framework Differences	00:20:01
Impact & Mitigations	1:06:45
Ofsted Update & Q and A	<p>This section of the session was not recorded at Ofsted's request who also requested that their slides were not shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A summary of Ofsted's slides are contained in this pack</li><li>• A summary of the points made by Ofsted can be found on our Ofsted Update page with the latest slides and resources <u><a href="#">HERE</a></u></li><li>• An FAQ is published monthly also on the Ofsted Update Page</li></ul>

## Useful Resources & Links

- [Ofsted Education - FE& Skills Blog](#)
- [Ofsted FE & Skills FAQ](#)
- [Ofsted New framework overview for FE and Skills](#)
- [Ofsted 'Renewed Approach' to Inspection](#)
- [Ofsted 2 minute overview of the new report card](#)
- [Find an Ofsted Inspection Report](#)
- [FE Inspectors Pen Portraits](#)
- [2025 FE & Skills Inspections & Outcomes as at 31 August 2025](#)



# Thank You

Please stay on line for the short feedback survey – This will appear as we close the session.

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