**INFORMATION ON LAY MEMBERSHIP OF INSPECTION TEAMS**

Lay members are volunteers who join a professional team of His Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) to help make sure that the views of parents, carers, learners and others are taken into account during inspections.

**What do HM Inspectors do?**

Part of the work HMI carry out is inspection. Each year, HMI inspect and publish reports on a wide range of education establishments and services. This range of services includes primary, secondary and special schools.

The inspectorate publishes reports on aspects of education. We identify strengths and areas for improvement. We share good practice in order to help improve standards and quality in Scottish education.

**Why do we use lay members?**

Our experience over a number of years has shown us that lay members help greatly in the inspection of public services.

Involving lay members in inspections provides an additional perspective and helps to make sure that we are able to take into account the views of those most closely concerned with services in education.

**Who can become a lay member?**

* You will have good interpersonal skills, sound judgement and a strong interest in education.
* Some experience, such as interviewing skills, drafting sections for publication or being able to share views and evaluate clearly, would be useful.
* You must not have been employed in an education establishment, for example as a teacher, support assistant, lecturer or community education worker.

The inspectorate is committed to ensuring that people from all backgrounds are given an opportunity to participate in our mission to promote improvements in standards, quality and attainment in Scottish education.

**Are lay members paid?**

As this is a voluntary role lay members are not paid, but do get travel, accommodation, meals and other incidental costs paid for. Help is available towards the cost of childcare when undertaking inspection activities.

**What time commitment is expected?**

Each school inspection will take up to two days of your time. This usually includes a full day in the school and time for preparation, reading and commenting on reports.

You may be involved in between three and five inspections each year.

You can be a lay member for up to three years.

**How much travel is involved?**

You will normally take part in inspections or reviews within a reasonable travel distance from your home. However, you may be required to spend time away from home depending on where the school is. Accommodation is provided for you in these instances.

**Who chooses the educational services to be inspected?**

The inspectorate chooses which schools are to be inspected.

We will not allocate you to a school or local authority that you have a personal interest or association, for example as a parent or a member of the Parent Council.

**What does a lay member do?**

The HMI leading the inspection will guide your work in the inspection. They will agree a programme of activity for you.

You will not need to be concerned with professional issues such as approaches to teaching, attainment or nutrition-related issues. Your role will focus on relationships and on issues raised by learners, parents, carers or the Parent Council.

The programme of inspection activities for lay members is varied and wide-ranging. For example, in schools, it may include activities such as:

* considering responses to pre-inspection questionnaires completed by parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, and pupils;
* a discussion with the chair of the Parent Council;
* a meeting with a group of parents;
* a meeting with non-teaching school staff;
* discussions with children / young people;
* reporting findings to HM Inspectors; and
* commenting on the draft report.

**Does a lay member receive training?**

You will have two days of initial training. There will also always be an HMI on hand on inspection to give advice. You can get additional training if necessary.

You will be expected to write up your findings in clear, concise English.

A working understanding of and ability to use information technologies are essential, because a lot of the evidence is available only in electronic format in many schools and local authorities. Education Scotland is committed to sustainable development through reducing its carbon footprint. We will always communicate electronically in the first instance.

**What other responsibilities are there?**

The information you obtain must be kept confidential.

You will give feedback on your views of aspects of a school to the HMI leading the inspection.

**How can I find out more?**

You can find more information on the work of Education Scotland and an application form on our website [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk). or alternatively contact Guch Dhillon on 07748 181 526 or guch.dhillon@educationscotland.gov.scot.

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