



Self-Assessment Report (SAR) & Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024-2025

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Contents

- 1 Introduction & Context
 - 2 Self-Evaluation Framework & Approach
 - 3 Self-Evaluation Report: 2024-2025
 - 3.1 Safeguarding
 - 3.2 Inclusion
 - 3.3 Leadership and Governance
 - 3.4 Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs
 - 3.5 Curriculum, Teaching and Training
 - 3.6 Achievement
 - 3.7 Participation and Development
 - 4 Quality Assurance, External Validation & Reporting
 - 5 Strategic Priorities & Quality Improvement Plan 2025-2026
 - 6 Self-Evaluation Summary & Judgements
 - 7 References
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1. Introduction & Context

LionHeart in the Community (LITC) is a dedicated provider of sector-aligned vocational education and training for adult learners across multiple sites. In the 2024–2025 academic year, we have supported over 1,400 learners through a combination of blended and in-person

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programmes spanning health & social care, computing, business, accounting, beauty & barbering, and community services.

Our learner cohort demonstrates remarkable diversity, with a significant 75% increase in BAME enrolments since 2022–2023, alongside a growing proportion of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), care-experienced learners, and late entrants. Our mission centres on promoting social mobility, providing accessible opportunities, and ensuring strong learner outcomes that lead to sustainable employment and progression.

This document has been comprehensively revised to align with Ofsted's renewed Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and the new report card inspection model commencing November 2025 [1]. The structure mirrors the new evaluation areas, providing transparent assessment against the updated standards while maintaining our commitment to continuous improvement and inspection readiness.

2. Self-Evaluation Framework & Approach

Our self-evaluation framework operates on evidence-based principles designed to provide a critical and objective assessment of our provision. The framework encompasses several key elements that ensure rigorous and comprehensive evaluation.

Alignment with the Renewed EIF: The SAR is structured around the new evaluation areas of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, including the standalone judgement for Inclusion and the combined area of Participation and Development. This alignment ensures our self-assessment directly corresponds to inspection criteria.

Embedded Cross-Cutting Themes: Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) are woven throughout our evaluation rather than treated as separate appendices, reflecting their fundamental importance to all aspects of our provision.

Evidence-Based Judgements: Our self-evaluations draw from comprehensive evidence sources including learner surveys, programme reviews, teaching and learning observations, internal and external moderation, stakeholder feedback, and governing body oversight. This multi-source approach ensures balanced and accurate assessment.

External Validation: To maintain objectivity and accuracy, our judgements undergo moderation by governors and external advisors with expertise in the further education sector. This external perspective helps validate our self-assessments and identify areas for improvement.

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Inspection Readiness Culture: We maintain continuous readiness for inspection, ensuring comprehensive evidence of our performance is available at any time. This approach supports ongoing improvement rather than reactive preparation.

3. Self-Evaluation Report: 2024-2025

3.1. Safeguarding

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Met

Safeguarding represents a fundamental aspect of LITC's culture, extending far beyond compliance requirements. Our comprehensive approach ensures the safety and well-being of all learners through robust policies, procedures, and practices that are regularly reviewed and updated.

Strengths and Embedded Practice:

Our safeguarding framework operates through a dedicated team of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) at all sites, supported by central oversight. All staff, contractors, and volunteers complete mandatory annual training in safeguarding, Prevent, and EDI, supplemented by regular refreshers and scenario-based engagement. This comprehensive training approach ensures consistent understanding and application of safeguarding principles across our organisation.

Learner induction incorporates extensive modules covering safeguarding, Prevent, digital safety, professional boundaries, and whistleblowing procedures. All learners sign a Safeguarding Acknowledgement Declaration, demonstrating their understanding of these critical areas. Our focus on mental health and wellbeing is evidenced by 85% of staff completing mental health first aid training, enabling early identification and appropriate support for learners experiencing difficulties.

Digital safety receives particular attention through our Acceptable Use Policies, e-Safety modules, and specialised tutor training to identify and mitigate online risks. We ensure all employers hosting learners for work placements complete mandatory LITC safeguarding induction, with compliance tracked through our CRM system to maintain consistent standards across all learning environments.

Areas for Enhancement:

While our safeguarding practices demonstrate strength, we have identified opportunities for further development. We are implementing a new online induction portal for employers to enhance compliance, consistency and efficiency. Recognition of the need for improved

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parental engagement has led to the development of induction webinars, guardian information packs, and periodic bulletins. To strengthen governance oversight, we will appoint a safeguarding specialist to our governing body, providing additional expertise and scrutiny.

3.2. Inclusion

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Expected Standard

Inclusion forms a core value at LITC, underpinning our commitment to providing an accessible and supportive learning environment for all learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with additional needs.

Strengths and Impact:

Our commitment to inclusion is demonstrated through significant growth in BAME enrolments, increasing by 75% year-on-year, while female representation in technical disciplines continues to rise. Staff diversity improvements include 42% BAME representation and 56% female leadership, creating role models and diverse perspectives throughout our organisation.

Comprehensive support for learners with LDD operates through Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) that are regularly reviewed and tracked to ensure appropriate adjustments and support. Our tutors employ a six-point EDI audit checklist for lesson design, ensuring accessibility, representation, and language neutrality across all teaching activities. EDI integration within our staff development programme includes peer reviews, case discussions, and resource sharing to promote best practice.

Our network of EDI Ambassadors and learner voice groups actively contribute to policy development, curriculum design, and inclusion projects, ensuring learner perspectives inform our approach. Annual Equality & Inclusion Week and cultural events celebrate diversity while promoting understanding and respect. Development of intersectionality tools provides tailored support for learners with overlapping protected characteristics, while our planned Learner Inclusion Dashboard will monitor access, participation, achievement, and retention by protected categories.

Areas for Enhancement:

Despite a strong commitment to inclusion, significant outcome gaps exist for learners with LDD, requiring targeted intervention. We are implementing scaffolded assessment approaches and assistive technology to address these disparities. Male recruitment in caring sectors remains low, prompting targeted outreach and employer collaboration initiatives. Assessment practice revision will incorporate inclusive design principles, offering a choice of methods and alternative formats to better accommodate diverse learning needs.

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3.3. Leadership and Governance

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Strong Standard

Our leadership and management team provides clear strategic direction, ensuring effective alignment between curriculum, enrolment, quality, and compliance functions. Strong governance oversight supports accountability and continuous improvement across all aspects of our provision.

Strategic Alignment and Governance:

Leadership effectiveness is demonstrated through strategic alignment between curriculum development, learner recruitment, quality assurance, and regulatory compliance. Our governing body receives comprehensive dashboards, participates in learner forums, and conducts regular safeguarding reviews, ensuring robust oversight and accountability. CPD and appraisal systems align staff development with strategic objectives, supporting both individual growth and organisational improvement.

Proactive preparation for Ofsted's new inspection model includes pilot dashboards, nominee training, and readiness audits, demonstrating our commitment to meeting evolving regulatory requirements. Staff wellbeing receives priority attention through initiatives ensuring manageable workloads and supportive working environments, recognising that staff welfare directly impacts learner outcomes.

Staff Wellbeing and Workload Management:

Our approach to staff wellbeing encompasses workload monitoring, professional development opportunities, and supportive management practices. Regular staff surveys and feedback mechanisms enable the identification of concerns and the implementation of appropriate support measures. Recognition and reward systems acknowledge staff contributions while promoting a positive workplace culture.

Areas for Enhancement:

Middle management development requires attention, particularly in newer disciplines where leaders may lack experience in further education contexts. Internal communication consistency across sites needs improvement to ensure strategic changes are effectively communicated and implemented. We are implementing leadership coaching sessions, quarterly alignment meetings, and enhanced internal communication channels to address these areas.

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3.4. Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Strong Standard

LITC demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring our curriculum aligns with employer needs and local and national economic priorities. Our approach involves extensive stakeholder engagement and regular curriculum review to maintain relevance and impact.

Employer Engagement and Economic Alignment:

Close collaboration with employers, local authorities, and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) ensures our programmes provide learners with the skills and knowledge required for workplace success. Regular curriculum review and updates reflect the latest industry trends and developments, maintaining relevance and employability focus.

Sector-specific advisory boards provide valuable input into curriculum design and delivery, ensuring industry expertise informs our approach. Strong focus on employability skills development includes modules on professionalism, ethics, and sustainability across all programmes, preparing learners for modern workplace expectations.

Skills Development and Progression:

Our programmes incorporate clear progression pathways that align with local and national skills priorities. Partnerships with employers enable work placement opportunities that provide real-world experience while meeting industry needs. Graduate destination tracking demonstrates positive outcomes and economic impact.

Areas for Enhancement:

Continued development of our employer engagement strategy explores new approaches to curriculum co-design and co-delivery. We are developing systematic approaches to tracking programme impact on the local economy, enabling better demonstration of our contribution to regional skills development.

3.5. Curriculum, Teaching and Training

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Strong Standard

Our programmes demonstrate clear design principles with explicit knowledge, skills, and employability trajectories. Curriculum mapping ensures transparent progression routes while employer and stakeholder input maintains content relevance and currency.

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Curriculum Design and Implementation:

Programme design incorporates clear statements of learning outcomes and progression pathways, supported by comprehensive curriculum mapping. Diagnostic assessments and bridging modules support learners enrolling late or from non-standard backgrounds, ensuring inclusive access to learning opportunities.

Highly qualified tutors deliver teaching rated as "excellent" or "good" by 97% of learners. Our blended learning model combines Google Classroom, asynchronous tasks, and synchronous support, providing flexible learning opportunities that accommodate diverse learner needs. Differentiated teaching approaches include scaffolded tasks and extension activities supporting all learners.

Teaching Quality and Professional Development:

Regular teaching observations and peer review support continuous improvement in teaching quality. Professional development programmes focus on inclusive pedagogy, feedback quality, and adaptive teaching strategies. Tutor confidence in supporting diverse learners continues to develop through targeted training and peer support.

Areas for Enhancement:

Variability in formative assessment consistency and quality across curricula requires attention through standard feedback templates and peer coaching initiatives. Some tutors require additional confidence in adjusting teaching for learners with LDD or low starting points. Remote engagement protocols will enhance online learning experiences through improved interaction techniques.

3.6. Achievement

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Expected Standard

Learner achievement shows consistent performance, as reflected in retention and pass rates. However, achievement gaps for specific learner groups require targeted intervention to ensure equitable outcomes.

Achievement Data and Trends:

Overall achievement rate of 91.2% demonstrates strong learner success, supported by a retention rate of 92.4% and a pass rate of 98.8%. Significant improvement in BAME learner outcomes on short courses now approaches parity with the general cohort, demonstrating

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effective inclusive practices. RARPA and non-accredited tracking capture learner growth where formal qualifications are not appropriate.

Performance Analysis:

Achievement data analysis reveals strengths in overall performance while highlighting specific areas requiring attention. Progression tracking demonstrates positive destinations for most learners, with employment and further study outcomes meeting expectations. Regular data review enables early identification of trends and implementation of appropriate interventions.

Areas for Enhancement:

Achievement rates for learners with LDD at 65.5% require significant improvement through targeted support and intervention. Inconsistent progression to higher levels in newer electives needs addressing through enhanced guidance and support. Establishment of a Progression Support Unit, enhanced mentor support, and real-time dashboard implementation will address these challenges.

3.7. Participation and Development

Self-Evaluation Judgement: Strong Standard

Personal development is integral to the learner experience at LITC, encompassing behaviour, attitudes, attendance, and broader development opportunities. Our comprehensive approach develops well-rounded individuals equipped with professional agency, civic awareness, and essential life skills.

Behaviour and Attendance:

Excellent attendance and punctuality rates, with attendance consistently exceeding 90% and punctuality over 95%, demonstrate strong learner engagement. A clear Code of Conduct and Behaviour Agreement, signed by all learners at induction, establishes expectations reinforced through weekly tutorials and college signage. Classes operate with minimal disruption within a visible culture of respect and mutual support.

Explicit teaching of growth mindset, digital responsibility, and self-management equips learners with essential personal and professional skills. Behaviour logging and tracking systems enable early identification of concerns and implementation of appropriate support measures.

Personal Development and Enrichment:

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The comprehensive careers education, information, advice, and guidance (CEIAG) programme includes 1:1 career planning sessions and Careers Action Plans for all learners. A wide range of enrichment and development opportunities engages 70% of learners in non-accredited programmes covering cultural, health, community projects, and digital literacy.

Values, citizenship, and safeguarding education through tutorials cover British Values, Prevent, equality, and digital safety. Learner leadership opportunities through EDI Ambassadors and Learner Ambassadors provide a voice in curriculum review, policy development, and enrichment design.

Health, Wellbeing and Support:

Mental health awareness, resilience, and personal well-being integration within tutorials and enrichment sessions support learner development. Drop-in welfare services, counselling referrals, and external support provide comprehensive wellbeing support. Online safety, cyber-wellness, and responsible digital conduct teaching reinforce safe practice.

Areas for Enhancement:

Long-term impact tracking of enrichment programmes requires improvement through post-exit surveys gathering alumni outcomes and personal growth data. Personal Development Maps for each programme will ensure comprehensive coverage of financial, civic, and health literacy. An enhanced connection between values education and employment contexts will strengthen real-world application.

4. Quality Assurance, External Validation & Reporting

Our quality assurance framework operates through multiple layers of internal and external validation, ensuring consistent standards and continuous improvement across all provisions. Direct Claim Status (DCS) maintenance for NCFE, ATHE, AAT, VTCT, and FOCUS Awards demonstrates our commitment to quality standards and regulatory compliance.

Internal Quality Assurance:

Quarterly teaching observations, work scrutiny, programme reviews, peer moderation, and external visits provide comprehensive quality monitoring. Internal dashboard development pilots mirror future inspection data requirements, enabling proactive quality management. Regular feedback collection from learners, staff, and employers informs termly improvement cycles.

External Validation:

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Awarding body relationships ensure external validation of our assessment practices and standards. Regular external verifier visits provide independent confirmation of quality and compliance. Stakeholder feedback from employers and partner organisations validates programme relevance and effectiveness.

Reporting and Improvement:

Integrated safeguarding and EDI audits within quality assurance cycles ensure cross-cutting themes receive appropriate attention. Board oversight through regular reporting enables governance scrutiny and strategic direction. Quality improvement planning directly links to self-assessment findings and external feedback.

5. Strategic Priorities & Quality Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Our Quality Improvement Plan addresses key areas identified through self-assessment and aligns with the new Ofsted framework requirements. Each strategic aim includes specific actions, measurable targets, clear leadership accountability, and realistic timescales.

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Close the LDD and vulnerable learner outcome gaps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Implement targeted interventions, including scaffolded assessment and assistive technology2. Enhance mentor support for LDD learners3. Provide additional CPD for staff on supporting learners with LDD4. Establish Progression Support Unit	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase the achievement rate for learners with LDD to 75% by July 20262. Reduce the in-year achievement gap between LDD learners and peers by 10 percentage points3. 100% of staff complete CPD on supporting learners with LDD by December 20254. Progression Support Unit operational by January 2026	Head of Inclusion	July 2026

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Strategic Aim	Key Actions	Success Criteria (SMART Targets)	Lead	Timescale
Strengthen formative assessment and feedback consistency	1. Develop and implement standard feedback templates across all programmes 2. Introduce peer coaching on formative assessment and feedback 3. Monitor quality and consistency through regular learning walks and work scrutiny 4. Implement remote engagement protocols	1. 100% of programmes using standard feedback templates by January 2026 2. All tutors participate in peer coaching on formative assessment by April 2026 3. Learning walks show 20% improvement in formative assessment quality by July 2026 4. Remote engagement protocols implemented by December 2025	Head of Quality	July 2026



Strategic Aim	Key Actions	Success Criteria (SMART Targets)	Lead	Timescale
Enhance safeguarding culture and partner compliance	1. Launch a new online induction portal for employers 2. Appoint a safeguarding specialist governor 3. Develop and deliver induction webinars for parents and guardians 4. Strengthen board-level safeguarding oversight	1. 100% of employers complete new online induction by December 2025 2. Safeguarding specialist governor in post by November 2025 3. At least 50% of parents/guardians attend the induction webinar by January 2026 4. Enhanced safeguarding reporting to the board quarterly from November 2025	Designated Safeguarding Lead	July 2026
Fully embed EDI across the curriculum and assessment	1. Revise assessment practices to incorporate inclusive designs 2. Develop and implement Personal Development Maps for each programme 3. Launch Learner Inclusion Dashboard to monitor EDI data 4. Enhance male recruitment in caring sectors	1. All assessment briefs revised to include inclusive design principles by April 2026 2. Personal Development Maps in place for all programmes by September 2025 3. Learner Inclusion Dashboard operational and informing planning by January 2026 4. Increase male enrolment in caring sectors by 15% by July 2026	Head of EDI	July 2026

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Strategic Aim	Key Actions	Success Criteria (SMART Targets)	Lead	Timescale
Strengthen employer engagement and skills alignment	1. Develop co-design and co-delivery approaches with employers 2. Implement systematic tracking of programme impact on the local economy 3. Enhance sector-specific advisory board effectiveness 4. Expand work placement opportunities	1. At least 3 programmes co-designed with employers by July 2026 2. Economic impact tracking system operational by March 2026 3. All advisory boards review and enhance terms of reference by December 2025 4. Increase work placement opportunities by 25% by July 2026	Head of Employer Engagement	July 2026

6. Self-Evaluation Summary & Judgements

The following table summarises our self-evaluation judgements against the new Ofsted framework evaluation areas, providing a clear assessment of our current performance and areas for development.

Evaluation Area	Self-Evaluation Judgement	Key Evidence Highlights	Priority Development Areas
Safeguarding	Met	Comprehensive policies and procedures; 85% staff mental health first aid trained; robust employer induction processes	Online employer portal; enhanced parental engagement; safeguarding specialist governor
Inclusion	Expected Standard	75% increase in BAME enrolments; comprehensive LDD support through ILPs; EDI Ambassadors network	LDD achievement gaps; male recruitment in caring sectors; inclusive assessment design

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Evaluation Area	Self-Evaluation Judgement	Key Evidence Highlights	Priority Development Areas
Leadership and Governance	Strong Standard	Strategic alignment; robust governance oversight; proactive Ofsted preparation; staff wellbeing focus	Middle management development; internal communication consistency
Contribution to Meeting Skills Needs	Strong Standard	Strong employer engagement; sector advisory boards; employability skills focus	Systematic economic impact tracking; enhanced co-design approaches
Curriculum, Teaching and Training	Strong Standard	97% learner satisfaction with teaching; comprehensive curriculum mapping; qualified tutors	Formative assessment consistency; tutor confidence with LDD learners
Achievement	Expected Standard	91.2% achievement rate; 92.4% retention; BAME parity in short courses	LDD achievement gaps (65.5%); progression consistency in newer electives
Participation and Development	Strong Standard	>90% attendance; comprehensive CEIAG; 70% enrichment participation; strong behaviour culture	Long-term enrichment impact tracking; Personal Development Maps

7. References

- [1] GOV.UK. (2025). *Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>
- [2] FE Week. (2025). *Ofsted overhaul: What you need to know about new-style inspections*. <https://feweek.co.uk/ofsted-overhaul-what-you-need-to-know-about-new-style-inspections/>
- [3] GOV.UK. (2025). *Further education and skills inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>

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