

# Review of Voluntary Sector Organisations (Community Learning and Development)

## **Workers' Educational Association Scotland**

20 November 2007

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## 1. Introduction

In April 2007, the Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (ETLLD) commissioned HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) to undertake a review of the Workers' Education Association (WEA) Scotland. HMIE and ETLLD agreed the quality and performance indicators to be used in the review from the framework of indicators within the HMIE publication *How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development?*<sup>2</sup> (HGIOCLD<sup>2</sup>).

The fieldwork for the review took place between 11 and 14 September 2007. Visits to seven local authority areas across Scotland were undertaken to interview adult learners in focus groups and key local development workers and managers. A series of interviews and focus groups were conducted with members of the Scottish Management Committee of the WEA, managers and staff. Interviews were conducted with strategic managers from a range of partner agencies that fund and work with the WEA Scotland. A series of interviews both in person and by telephone were conducted with WEA England and Scotland (WEA-ES) trustees and senior managers. The fieldwork also included an examination of policies and procedures and an assessment of financial monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Questionnaires were distributed to key stakeholders in Scotland's local authorities that fund the WEA, relevant national organisations and public bodies in Scotland. Questionnaires were returned from 19 organisations. These included local authorities, national voluntary organisations and public bodies. HMIE also undertook a search of previous inspection reports on community learning and development (CLD) to collate and analyse evaluative information in relation to the WEA.

The WEA provided a comprehensive and well-considered self-evaluation in advance of the review, together with documentary evidence to support their self-evaluation.

The cooperation of managers, staff and other stakeholders is gratefully acknowledged.

## 2. Context and background

Founded in 1903 by 27 year old Albert Mansbridge, the WEA was created to promote the higher education of working men and women at a time when few educational opportunities existed for the working class. The WEA-ES is a national voluntary organisation which provides adult education based on democratic principles with the help of its students and members. In 1905, the first WEA branch was founded in Scotland in Springburn.

The WEA-ES is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The WEA Scotland is recognised by and in receipt of grant from ETLLD for its headquarters administration. WEA Scotland also receives revenue grants for local education programmes from the majority of Scottish local authorities. It has secured significant but time-limited project funding from the Scottish Enterprise and Highland and Islands Enterprise Networks, European Union and trusts and foundations. With an annual turnover in 2005/6 of £2.7million WEA Scotland works with a range of local authority, enterprise companies, employers, trades unions and voluntary sector partners to develop and deliver adult learning in the workplace and in the community. There are 14,000 enrolments on courses organised by the WEA in over 200 locations across Scotland. WEA Scotland has gained and retained Scottish Quality Management Systems (SQMS) endorsement for seven years.

The WEA Scotland has a long history of workplace and community based adult learning and continues to promote this work nationally and locally through publicity material, its website and through a range of partnership initiatives. There are more than 1,000 individuals and affiliated organisations in membership of the WEA Scotland. Members contribute to governing the work of the organisation and organising and promoting WEA educational programmes in local associations, branches and student groups. The WEA's branch structure seeks to provide the benefits of a national organisation with local accountability and responsiveness.

A Scottish committee manages the WEA Scotland on behalf of the directors and trustees of WEA-ES. The responsibility for the strategic and operational management lies with the Scottish Secretary. The Scottish Secretary manages a senior management team of four who report to the Scottish Committee. The Scottish Secretary and the Deputy Secretary manage 28 core staff which includes a team of seven Area Tutor Organisers (ATOs) across Scotland. The ATOs are responsible for the development and delivery of WEA learning programmes. The ATOs manage 286 course tutors and 45 project staff in their geographic areas and also support the local branches.

The WEA's priority is to reach people who face barriers to learning.

The commitment is to:

- build skills, including confidence, literacies and citizenship;
- provide equality of access to learning;
- give priority to providing learning for educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged groups;
- motivate adults to actively engage in learning and progress to further learning opportunities; and,
- not discriminate in matters of gender, sexuality, race, age and disability.

### **3. Key strengths**

The review of the WEA Scotland identified the following key strengths:

- The ethos and values of the organisation and its commitment to equality.
- Highly committed staff and members who were passionate and enthusiastic about learning.
- High quality learning materials.
- The extensive range of learning programmes and opportunities to engage with learning.
- An extensive range of effective and productive partnership working.

- Highly effective at obtaining external funding for specific projects.
- The organisations' democratic branch structure gave learners regular opportunity to influence and shape the development of the WEA Scotland.

#### **4. How well did Workers' Educational Association Scotland meet the needs of its stakeholders?**

##### **How well did the WEA Scotland impact on adult learners?**

Learners who had participated in return to learning, childcare and job rotation programmes had significantly increased their confidence and self-esteem as a result of their participation. Their involvement in courses had led to employment, job promotion, further training and education opportunities. Learners in the *Parents Early Education Programme (PEEP)* Child Development and Learning course in Aberdeen had highly positive experiences of learning. Learners spoke of the group being the first positive experience they had had where they were respected as parents and learners and not as former drug users. They had obtained significant parenting skills within a learning environment that was safe and supportive. Adults with long term limiting illnesses and physical disabilities involved in the *Wellbeing Initiative* in Glasgow gained significant support from the WEA to help them develop their confidence and learn new skills. The WEA provided workplace literacy to support these learners on their return to employment. The majority of participants from this programme progressed to further education or employment.

All learners in WEA programmes were clearly able to state their learning goals. These goals included progressing to and participating in a wide range of accredited learning programmes, increased skills in literacy and numeracy, and new workplace skills such as health and safety. For example, adults working in the public sector who participated in the *Return to Learn* courses with their trade union and the *Starting Points* course in Falkirk had progressed from basic literacy programmes and were now working towards gaining Intermediate Communications. Learners with mental health problems in the *Reach Out* project in Aberdeen had established clear learning goals. They had planned a learning weekend in Edinburgh, that included the development of the programme, budgeting for and purchasing food. They had established ground rules for the trip and participated fully in its evaluation. Learners in the *Job Rotation* programme who were previously long-term unemployed had significantly improved their literacy and numeracy and found employment.

A considerable number of learners had developed new interests as a result of their participation in areas such as creative writing and drama. A workplace literacy learner group in West Lothian had produced a high quality publication entitled *The Write Road* which featured their fiction, poems and biographies. Learners in Broxburn and Bo'ness had contributed significantly to the development in highly innovative oral history programmes around the former Levis factory in Whitburn and the Hippodrome cinema in Bo'ness. Learners in the *Riddle's Court Project* were documenting the history of the WEA's Scottish headquarters and were learning new skills in digital photography, historical research, writing and oral history. They had produced a high quality book that used photographs, creative writing and history that documented the important role that Riddle's Court held as a venue for learning in Scotland. This encompassed the work of the philosopher David Hume to Patrick Geddes' development of the first University Halls of Residence and European Summer School, to the WEA.

## **Feature of good practice: Parents Early Education Programme (PEEP) Child Development and Learning course**

*Making the most of your Children* is an SQA accredited programme, closely aligned to the Scottish Executive's *Birth to Three* guidance, and *PEEP* was developed by the WEA to support community parent groups. The programme provides formal recognition of the vital role parents and carers play as the most influential educators in the early years. The units explore parenting and child development in the context of the family and encourage personal development through the natural interest parents have in their children's learning, and through exploring the home as a learning environment. Essential to the success of the programme has been the development of a comprehensive training unit, which has been developed to inform CLD Managers interested in incorporating the units into community programmes and practitioners from a variety of family learning backgrounds who would be involved in delivering community based courses. The training looks more closely at course content, the process of delivery, SQA accreditation and how best to capture learning through the diary folio.

### **Learners' voices from the featured programme:**

*"For me it was life changing. My lack of drive and focus had turned around completely and now I feel so positive about my life. Instead of accepting my fate of being a robotic single parent, I have an amazing amount of ambition and determination to succeed. Instead of wishing I had a better life, I am making a better life for myself."*

## **Features of good practice: Job Rotation**

WEA Scotland brought the job rotation model to Scotland in 1995. Job rotation works primarily with small companies to help them by organising training needs analysis, developing their staff and providing additional workers to release their current employees for training and development.

The job rotation model addresses three needs in the Scottish economy:

- The need to support the development of small and medium sized companies.
- The need to continuously develop the skills of the workforce.
- The need to break the cycle of long-term unemployment experienced by some people living in Scotland.

People benefit from training and personal development support which greatly enhances their prospects of job retention. The majority of learners have gained sustainable employment. The programme has been highly successful in areas of multiple deprivation.

### **Learners' voices from the featured programme**

*"Job Rotation was excellent in getting me started into a new job. I found staff extremely helpful, friendly and very approachable."*

*"Job Rotation helped me get back into the workplace and provided me with training for the job. This has helped me become more confident."*

*"My time on Job Rotation was very enjoyable and then it moved me into a full-time job..."*

## How well did the WEA Scotland impact on local communities?

The work of the WEA Scotland had a significant and sustained impact on local communities. In Fife, members in their branches developed and organised local learning events as their contribution to national programmes such as literacy and numeracy, anti-slavery and healthy eating. To support this work, the WEA Scotland made extensive and productive contributions to collaborative networks with other organisations. WEA staff effectively supported and played highly active roles in adult literacy partnerships across Scotland in both the delivery and planning of programmes. There was effective work with new migrant groups across the country in teaching English. The literacy work, aligned to partnerships with other organisations such as *Wellbeing Initiative* who were working with former drug users, ensured that there was a strong focus on equality and inclusion throughout all of the literacy learning programmes. However, WEA work with adult Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender groups was under-developed at the time of the review.

The WEA Scotland had very effective planning, management and evaluation arrangements at local levels. These were linked closely with community planning objectives in local authorities with regard to skills development and literacy work. The majority of projects had been externally evaluated and audited as part of their quality assurance. Learners in the *Job Rotation* and *Return to Learn* programmes gained significant new skills and confidence as a result of their involvement. Participants in the *Return to Learn* programme noted that they were now more active in their workplace and learners had now progressed to become union learning representatives for their trade union. The *Job Rotation* and *PEEP* programmes were focused upon communities with high levels of deprivation and unemployment. As such, both learners and their wider communities had gained in terms of qualifications obtained and a decline in unemployment. Learners on these programmes also were more actively involved in their family lives and helped their children with school work. The focus of all of these programmes on excluded groups and communities meant that the WEA Scotland was having a significant impact.

Staff from the WEA Scotland had been particularly successful in developing cultural projects. There were a significant range of local oral history and documentary projects across Scotland. The majority of these would not have developed without the work of the WEA Scotland. These projects were led by local people and worked very effectively with historians, film makers, photographers and creative writers. In Inverness, women from the local area and new migrants had created the *International Women's Group* and the highly successful *Common Threads* sewing group to better meet the needs of women who preferred a more traditional focus for a friendship group. This group now contributed to annual cultural diversity day celebrations in the city. Recent high quality projects on the oral histories of three communities in Scotland during the World War 2 and a textile factory in West Lothian had been purposefully developed as learning resources for use by local schools and communities. The majority of the cultural projects and documents produced by the WEA Scotland had also contributed to national and local cultural archives.

### **Features of good practice: International Women's Group**

Due to an increase in the number of women from a minority ethnic background now living in the Inverness area, the WEA has developed two groups, the *International Women's Group* and the *Common Threads* group, to respond to the learning needs of the more isolated women within that broad category. Through consultation with participants, an initial International Women's Group was established seven years ago. WEA has responded to requests for a 'supported English' ICT and conversation class by running short-term booster courses. These learning programmes have provided support, an opportunity to meet new friends and integrate more fully in the community, gain new skills and find out about new opportunities.

As a result, group members now regularly share their cultures with the wider community and examples include multicultural presentations to schools, celebrating diversity days and multicultural ceilidhs.

### **Features of good practice: Return to Learn**

*Return to Learn* is a learning and communications skills course with a high level of personal development and student guidance built into the course work. It was developed through a partnership between the WEA and the public sector union UNISON. It is accredited through the SQA.

*Return to Learn* opens up existing and new learning and career opportunities. The majority of learners on the programme have few or no formal qualifications, have had a poor experience of the education system and have been away from learning for a long time. The programme now operates throughout the whole of Scotland. The focus is on public sector workers; workers in private and voluntary sectors contractors to these services; and the utilities companies. Learners have gained a range of skills and qualifications. Learners progress from the *Return to Learn* to become accredited union learning representatives and develop learning opportunities for their colleagues.

### **Features of good practice: Cultural work**

The WEA in Scotland had developed an extensive range of partnerships with museums, libraries and galleries to extend access to and maximise knowledge of local and national collections. These partnerships helped to develop a range of innovative oral history projects using books, film and recording.

The development of theatre, drama and storytelling learning programmes provided opportunities to study and discuss content, performance and production. This sometimes included behind the scenes visits to the theatre and discussion with writers, performers and directors. The development of literature study groups across Scotland allows participants to read and share opinions on a wide range of literature selected by the group themselves with the guidance of a tutor. The provision of creative writing, writers' workshops, song writing, play writing, writing for radio, community journalism, and courses such as *Getting Published* and *Poems and Pints* encouraged high levels of self-expression while honing skills.

Many learners progressed from these groups to become playwrights, writers and storytellers.

### **How well did the WEA Scotland impact on its voluntary and paid staff?**

All staff, tutor organisers, tutors and volunteers enjoyed very high morale and identified strongly with the organisation and its social purpose. Local tutors and voluntary members within local associations were very committed and highly supportive of the purposes of the organisations. All ATOs were effectively supported by the central management and administrative staff. ATOs had regular and effective performance reviews and were well supported in their personal planning. In addition, there was very good informal contact and continuing advice when needed. The ATOs also supported their tutors effectively through supervision and review. All staff had regular training and development opportunities. These were identified for staff through supervision and review. In addition they were regularly offered training opportunities by their managers and also had the opportunity to request training. All relevant training opportunities were provided within the resources available. Teamwork was very well developed. Staff identified with the team and with each other. They valued their colleagues and their contributions to the work of the team. Staff made good use of regular operational meetings to influence planning and policy developments. For example, staff had made very good use of opportunities to share practice from other countries including Denmark and Sweden in job rotation. Staff from the WEA Scotland had also made significant contributions to the staff development systems of WEA-ES and had provided important administrative support systems in child protection, health and safety at work and human resources.

## **5. How effective was Workers' Educational Association Scotland in key aspects of management?**

### **Inclusion, equality and fairness**

The programmes and projects of the WEA Scotland were clearly and deliberately targeted at disadvantaged and/or excluded groups such as ethnic minorities, literacies learners, and people with mental health problems. Staff made very good efforts to overcome barriers for learners. This resulted in sensitivity to the needs of excluded groups in course design, location, timing and physical access. The WEA Scotland made very effective use of the resources of partner organisations such as trade unions and large employers to support their equalities work. Crèches were regularly provided and induction loops were available. In Inverness, a good partnership with a local deaf charity had resulted in the regular provision of interpreters as required. All WEA branches were involved in training on equality and diversity. WEA staff were well trained in equality and diversity as part of staff development and within induction programmes for new staff. WEA staff in Scotland were now significantly supporting WEA-ES work to further the work of the organisation in equalities. However, there was a need to broaden the age range in the membership and branch activists to work with younger people and with some excluded groups. This area had been recognised by the Scottish Committee and senior management but work was still at an early stage of development.

### **Participation of service users and other stakeholders**

The WEA Scotland had well established and effective processes for members to be involved in organisational policy development and programmes. The Scottish committee of the WEA Scotland was elected from local associations and included former learners from WEA programmes. Members were highly committed to the work of the WEA and could speak confidently on the difference learning made to individuals and communities. There were regular celebration events both at national and local level and learning events were held on topics such as anti-slavery. Members in local branches regularly contributed to organisational decision making by contributing motions for debate and voting upon at the WEA Annual General Meeting. Members in Fife and Glasgow had recently created new groups in communities where previously there had been no WEA activities. Members also raised funds which they allocated to specific courses. They also funded and organised programmes of lunch time lectures on social themes. These new branches and their members were now delivering learning programmes, for example, the *Wider Horizons* programme in Kirkcaldy and Leven.

Senior managers and ATOs actively encouraged participation by members in developing programmes and a number of recent WEA projects such as the oral history of World War Two in three Scottish communities featured local learners who contributed to both the oral history and to the development of learning material for local schools. Learners contributed effectively to customising course content to meet their needs and to specific projects such as the *Reach Out* weekend in Edinburgh. The *Riddle's Court Project* developed by learners in Edinburgh was highlighted at the 2007 AGM, held in Riddle's Court and speeches by prominent speakers made reference to the document. There was regular communication to members in the form of newsletters and through branch correspondence. The WEA had developed an effective website that provided comprehensive details on its national and local programmes.

## **Operational planning**

The Scottish Committee and the Scottish Secretary developed the strategic plans for the organisation, in line with WEA-ES objectives and Scottish government policies. There were clear links between strategic, operational and project planning, for example, in the work with trade unions on workplace learning and literacy. There was strong alignment to adult literacy plans in local authorities. This helped to significantly support partnership work and the effective delivery of literacy programmes in local communities. Senior staff had ensured that plans for activities in geographic areas such as the Highlands made clear links to community planning objectives but also embodied the WEA priorities fully. WEA staff at all levels were regularly involved in planning and evaluation activities through the ATO network. Individual branches made active contributions to policy development. The WEA association members contributed meaningfully to planning through consultation and visioning exercises that were integral to the planning process. There were effective paper-based systems in place for monitoring and regularly reviewing progress towards targets. ATOs had regular and clear communication regarding project budgets. There were effective support systems for individual tutors such as tutor logs and programme guidance. As a result, programmes across the country were delivered consistently and effectively. However, in some community based literacy programmes, evaluation was too reliant on participant feedback alone and required additional objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the course in delivering progress for the learner. The organisation was still in the process of developing and implementing an electronic management information system.

## **Partnership working**

The WEA Scotland had very clear aims and all partnership work was informed by values and ethos of the organisation. WEA staff had developed an extensive range of partnerships with a diverse group of partners. These partnerships were highly productive and were producing high quality and innovative work and were particularly effective at engaging with excluded groups and individuals. These included the voluntary sector, trade unions, adult literacy partnerships, local authorities, libraries, large and medium sized employers and the Scottish Enterprise network. The WEA had developed clear and effective service level agreements with both local authorities and local enterprise companies to support their work in job rotation and adult literacies. This greatly assisted the projects in planning, monitoring and evaluation. WEA staff played an effective role in partnerships. ATOs were comfortable and highly competent when working in a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary partnership in areas such as *PEEP* or in cultural projects with artists and film makers. Staff consistently sought to develop and improve their partnerships, for example, in the *Job Rotation* programme across Ayrshire. Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities in partnership working. When required, WEA staff demonstrated clear leadership abilities to lead projects or to act as an independent broker when required. Local branches also effectively worked in partnerships with a range of agencies and organisations including local schools in developing their local learning programmes.

## **Financial management**

Senior Staff in the WEA Scotland had constructed very effective and consistent budget management systems. These included clear and transparent risk management assessments. These were clearly linked to both strategic and operational plans of the organisation and monitored by the Scottish Committee. The senior finance manager reported regularly to the Scottish Committee. Finance staff provided high quality support to ATOs who had devolved financial responsibility. Finance staff provided budget holders with regular budget

monitoring that led to financial reports each quarter. There were regular internal audits by WEA-ES as well as external audits from funding bodies to ensure best value. As a result, there were good working relationships between finance and administration staff and the ATO network. WEA staff in Scotland were highly effective in sourcing and obtaining a wide range of external funds. These included funds from the national lottery, the Scottish Arts Council and a variety of private trusts. The WEA Scotland had ensured that its financial systems, including cash flow, were well managed and robust to allow the organisation to obtain regular funds from European sources. These robust financial systems allowed the WEA to develop, embed and sustain a range of learning programmes over considerable lengths of time. This enabled the WEA Scotland to invest in sustained work with disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities. However, the organisation was still developing and implementing an electronic management information system. These were being aligned with relevant aspects of financial systems at the time of the review.

## **6. How effective was the leadership of Workers' Educational Association Scotland?**

### **Leadership and direction**

The Scottish Committee of the WEA provided the organisation with high levels of strong strategic leadership and direction. The WEA had an effective strategic planning framework that developed a clear and comprehensive three-year strategic plan. The Scottish Secretary and her senior staff consistently provided high quality leadership to the organisation. Staff at all levels were clear about their role and the ethos and values of the WEA. All senior staff were highly knowledgeable about current adult learning developments in Scotland and beyond. They were able to apply this knowledge to the development of new and innovative projects and programmes as well as to the CLD sector. Their expertise was recognised by the WEA-ES in their membership of internal WEA committees and projects. WEA staff were also recognised for their expertise at local and national levels and served on high level advisory bodies.

The senior staff communicated regularly and effectively with the ATO network by visits and correspondence. There were good risk evaluation systems and senior managers deployed their limited resources including staff, to considerable effect. This was most apparent in the high quality of partnership working and projects such as *Return to Learn*. The Scottish Secretary delegated responsibility very effectively and ensured that staff development activities were targeted and provided her staff with the appropriate skills. She had ensured that all staff were provided with regular challenges and with recognition. However, the organisation was still developing its approaches to succession planning at senior levels and asset management as part of its development of its own electronic management information system. This was necessary given a tightening financial scenario but this was still in development at the time of the review.

## **7. What is Workers' Educational Association Scotland's capacity to improve?**

The WEA provided high quality and innovative learning programmes for adult learners across Scotland. Many of its learners and programmes were exemplars of the positive difference that sustained educational investment underpinned by a strong and purposeful ethos can make to the lives of disadvantaged individuals and their communities. The strong democratic

framework of the WEA provided learners with real opportunities to take part in and to make a contribution. The WEA Scotland was developing and delivering work that no other CLD organisation was providing and the organisation was sector leading in terms of its practice and range of partnerships. The enthusiasm and commitment of WEA staff and members at all levels was a testimony to strong and effective leadership and strategic development of resources.

HMIE is confident that the evidence and evaluations in this review indicates that:

- the WEA Scotland is continuously seeking to improve the key outcomes and impacts of its work with individual learners, groups, communities and other stakeholders;
- the WEA is strongly committed to delivering equality of opportunity to learning for all of Scotland's citizens;
- management and leadership are highly effective; and
- quality improvement arrangements are very effective and the WEA Scotland has the capacity to continue to improve.

## **8. Main points for action**

- WEA Scotland should ensure that community based literacies work implement a consistent approach to planning that objectively identified the needs to be met and articulated the outcomes to be achieved at the start of courses.
- WEA Scotland should work with other national bodies such as YouthLink Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Youth Parliament to promote its work to young people.
- WEA Scotland should ensure that its work in communities is evaluated objectively and is publicised and celebrated at both local and national level.

## **9. What happens next?**

HMIE will take no further action in respect of this review and recommends that the WEA Scotland take action on the main points for action, above.

Philip Denning  
Managing Inspector  
HMIE

## Appendix 1: Quality indicators used to evaluate Workers' Educational Association Scotland

HM Inspectors use performance measures and quality indicators when making judgements in their reviews of national voluntary organisations. The quality indicators used were selected from those published in June 2006 in the publication *HGIOCLD?2*. This publication is available on the website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

In the report and this appendix we make clear the judgements made by using these word scale categories:

Excellent	Outstanding, sector leading
Very good	Major strengths
Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	Important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

Impact on adults	<b>Excellent</b>
Impact on local communities	<b>Very good</b>
Impact on paid and voluntary staff	<b>Excellent</b>
Inclusion, equality and fairness	<b>Very good</b>
Involvement of members	<b>Excellent</b>
Operational planning	<b>Very good</b>
Partnership working	<b>Excellent</b>
Financial management	<b>Very good</b>
Leadership	<b>Very good</b>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of community learning and development voluntary organisation reviews you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail [HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk). A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk).

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