Public stakeholder consultation about future inspection methodology

What is Estyn?

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales.

It is independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998.

An independent education inspectorate for Wales was first established in 1907.

What does Estyn do?

The sectors Estyn inspects include the following:

- nursery schools and settings
- primary and secondary schools
- special schools (including independent special schools)
- pupil referral units
- further education
- independent schools
- adult and community-based learning
- youth support services
- local authority services
- teacher education and training
- work-based learning
- the work of Careers Wales

Estyn 2010

The current six-year cycles of inspection for all sectors come to an end in 2010.

We wanted to give the people of Wales the opportunity to have a voice in the design of inspection services for the next cycles.

The aim of the consultation

The aims of the consultation were to:

- *find out the views of a representative sample of those who use and provide the services Estyn inspect; and*

- *provide information to Estyn in an appropriate form that allows us to design the way we inspect.*

Background

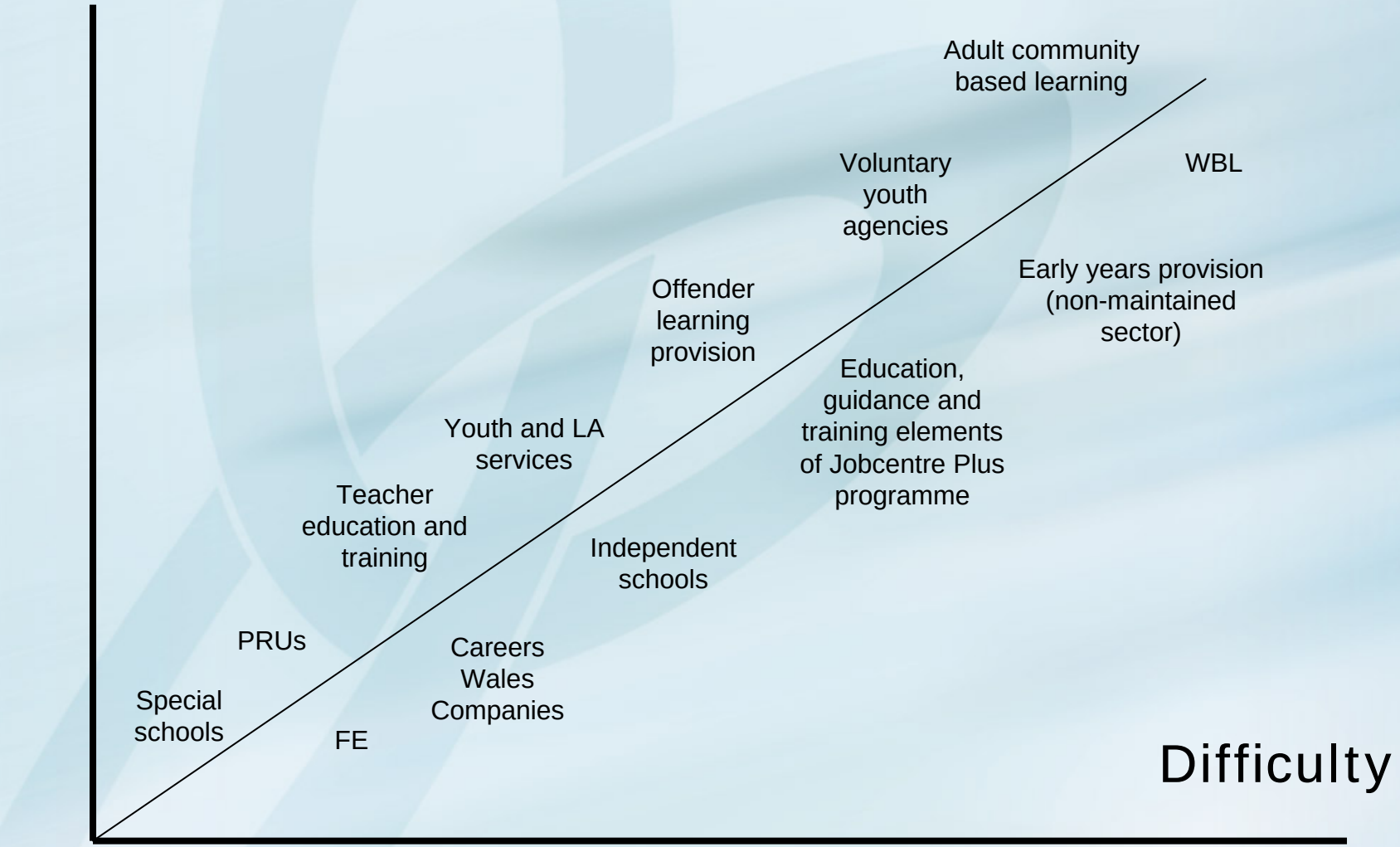
New public services agenda:

"increasingly complex social goals, especially preventive measures cannot be achieved by doing things to people, as opposed to doing things with them"

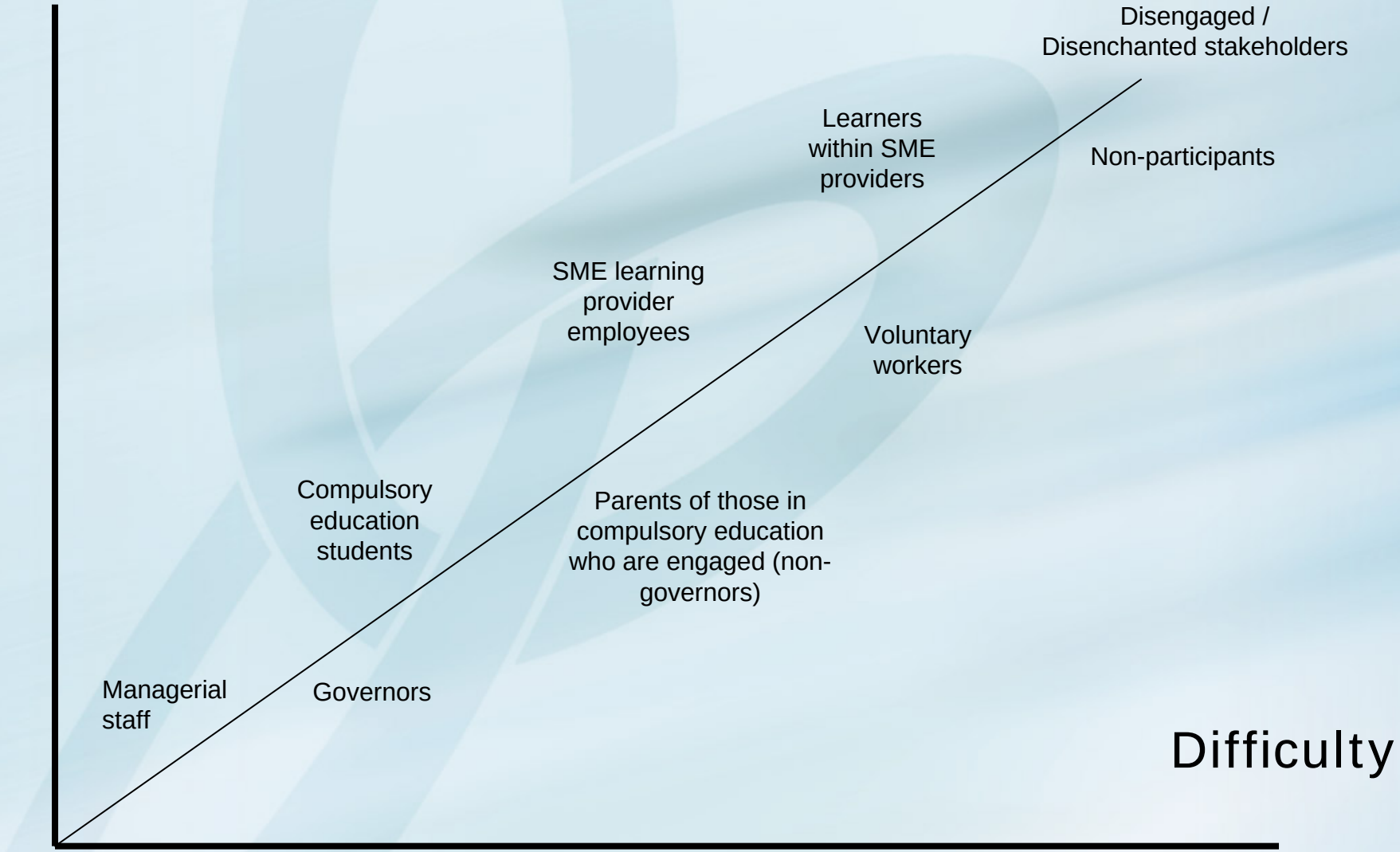
Welsh Assembly Government

Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales (2006)

Scoping the consultation



Scoping the consultation



The geographic sample

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Area	Population size ranking (1= largest)	Deprivation ranking (1=most deprived)	Geography	Language
Ceredigion	20	20	M	Welsh speaking
Gwynedd	13	18	N	Welsh speaking
Caerphilly	5	7	SE	
Wrexham	10	10	N	
Cardiff	1	4	SE	
Carmarthenshire	4	12	SW	Welsh speaking
Merthyr	22	1	SE	
Monmouthshire	17	22	SE	

Consultations included:

Stakeholder Forums (n=87)

Interviews with key personnel (n=13)

Website consultation (n=270)

TOTAL = 931

	Total
Early years provision (non-maintained)	24
Primary schools	53
Secondary schools	128
Special schools	33
PRUs	17
Independent schools	6
FE	132
Voluntary youth agencies	10
Youth and LA services	46
Aspects of offender learning	2
Teacher education and training	3
WBL	47
Careers Wales companies	23
Job Centre Plus Prog (elements)	30
ACL	27
Asylum Seekers and Refugees	4
BME groups	4
People living in deprived areas	69
People living in rural areas	76
Gypsy-Travellers	10
People with learning disabilities	27
People with mental health problems	23
Younger People	308
Older people	61
People with a disability	16
People with literacy language/numeracy difficulties	22
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people	2
Welsh Speakers	142
Homeless people	32
Total*	561

	Merthyr	Cardiff	Carmarthenshire	Monmouthshire	Ceredigion	Gwynedd	Caerphilly	Wrexham
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Homeless people								

Key

	groups accessed
	engagement agreed with gatekeeper(s)
?	on-going discussions with gatekeepers, not yet agreed but engagement likely and pursing contact(s)
X	contact not being pursued as non-exsistant, unlikely to be achieveable or previous contacts have declined

Method: Access issues

- Overall, a range of disparate groups are happy to be asked and keen to give views, even when not directly engaged in the world of education and training
- Pre-meetings with gatekeepers are necessary in order to negotiate access to vulnerable groups
- Barriers to speaking with young learners (arguably) created by the children and young peoples participation agenda
- Costs to consulting with certain groups/networks (i.e. BME networks)
- Social access has proved more difficult than physical access in certain communities and with particular individuals (e.g. PRU pupils, homeless people and asylum seekers/refugees)

Method: Other lessons

- The use of official gatekeepers tends to recruit “people like us”
- Some groups are suffering from consultation overload
- It takes considerable time and effort to gain the confidence of people who are not used to having their voices heard
- No one method of consultation will suit all people or equally elicit their views
- Most people have a view worth listening to if approached in the right way.

Findings

- What different groups want from inspection
- How learners think that inspection could improve their whole education experience
- How often inspections should be carried out
- What type of reporting format will be most useful and most user-friendly
- Whether citizens and providers think they should play a more prominent role in the inspection process than they do now; and
- How the inspection findings from our work can provide citizens with the information they need to bring about change.

What do different groups want from inspection?

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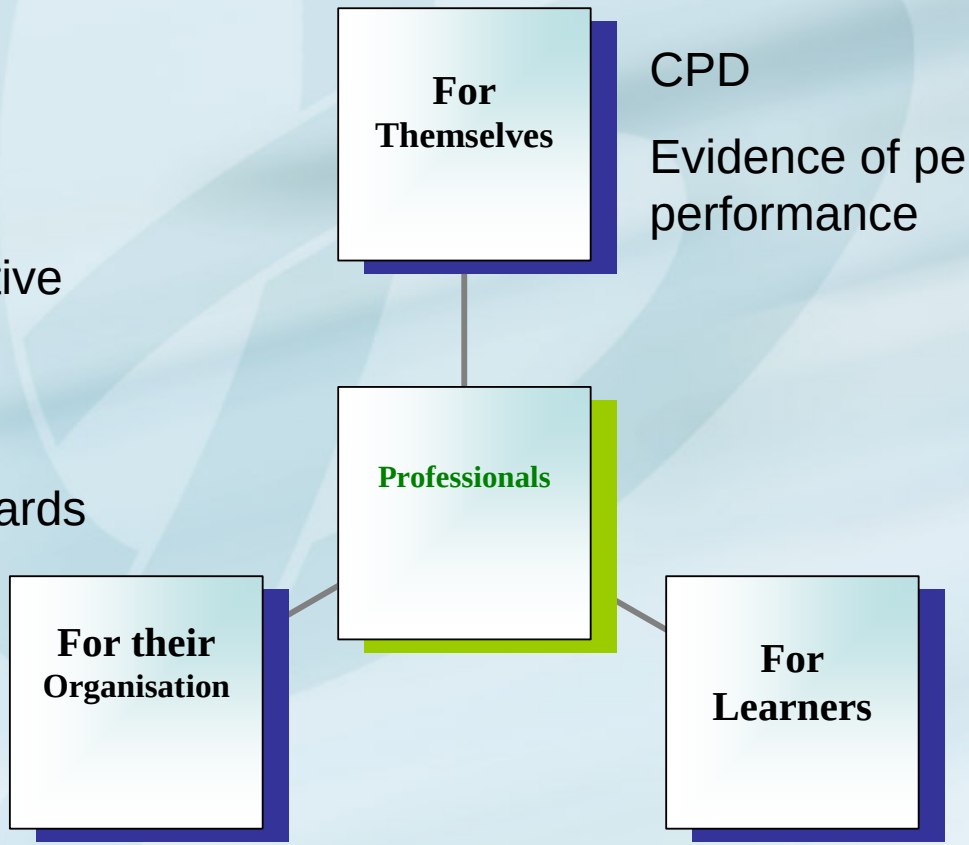

CPD

Evidence of personal performance

Inclusive/collaborative process

Advisory service

Ensure/raise standards

Support change

Re-motivate

PR

Support rights

Min disruption

Participation

What different groups want from inspection

Lay respondents:

- To ensure their children receive the best education and a positive school experience
- More than academic performance
- A majority want feedback/report information from school inspections.
- Less concern for non-school provision

How learners think that inspection could improve their whole education experience

- Children/young people & their parents:
  - Monitor teacher performance
  - Improve standards of education
  - Ensure the learning environment is suitable
  - When it was highlighted that inspection information is publicly available respondents felt they could have a choice
- Adult learners:
  - Perceive inspections to be of very little value to them as adults

How often should inspection be carried out?

Lay respondents:

- Many (70% or more) want shorter notice periods of inspection (ad hoc or 1 or 2 weeks notice desirable)
- Many want more frequent inspections (3 to 4 year cycles desirable)
- A minority (below 40%) would support technology based monitoring of education and training provision

Professional respondents:

- Around half would like shorter sharper more frequent inspections (in hand with self-evaluations), a minority of these believe this should be in addition to in-depth inspections approximately every 6 years.
- Around half believe the current model to be “about right”
- Very few would support technology based monitoring

What type of reporting will be most useful and most user-friendly?

Professional respondents:

- Around half believe the reports are fit for purpose
- Few professionals (below 20%, all non-school) do not read inspection reports because they are too long and lack direct relevance
- Around half would like more individual feedback (i.e. observational notes)
- A minority (below 40%) would like more specific recommendations
- Most (90% or more) agree summary/reports are not accessible to the communities they serve
- If reports were audience specific professionals agree that communities may be engaged

What type of reporting will be most useful and most user-friendly?

Lay respondents:

- A few community members and learners (below 20%) are not interested in the information Estyn collects
- Reports could be improved by the use of colour and by highlighting key information
- Initial 2 pages of the summary/reports (the key) should be incorporated into the main body of the document (as is the case for the Annual Report)

What type of reporting will be most useful and most user-friendly

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Lay communities:

- Most (90% or more) believe the internet is the most appropriate place for reports to be available, although very few (less than 10%) were aware they are currently available on-line
- Several interviewees requested audio reports to be available on-line
- Around half believed providers should make the information readily available, but very few (less than 10%) thought this should be made mandatory

Whether citizens and providers think they should play a more prominent role in the inspection process than they do now

Professional respondents:

- Nearly all professionals favoured the principle of peer inspectors
- The majority (over 60%) agreed with the principle of lay inspectors
- Most (90% or more) thought the role of the nominee works well, though a minority suggested a team of nominees would add value, particularly for larger inspections (LEA, youth service, etc.)

Whether citizens and providers think they should play a more prominent role in the inspection process than they do now

Lay respondents:

- Nearly all lay respondents were unaware of the system of nominees, peer inspectors and/or lay inspectors
- Around half favoured the principle of peer and lay inspectors
- Very few parents felt they had an opportunity to attend a pre-inspection briefing and/or input, most (90%) thought they would have valued this opportunity

Whether citizens and providers think they should play a more prominent role in the inspection process than they do now

Lay respondents:

- Nearly all learners believe consulting with learners should be an important part of the inspection process
- Around half of learners felt that for different reasons they or their peers would be unable to respond openly if an inspector had asked them questions.
- The majority of learners would like a mechanism by which they could input their views confidentially

How the inspection findings from our work can provide citizens with the information they need to bring about change

- Appetite for different reports for different user groups – particularly amongst professional groups who are aware that reports are not accessible to the communities they serve

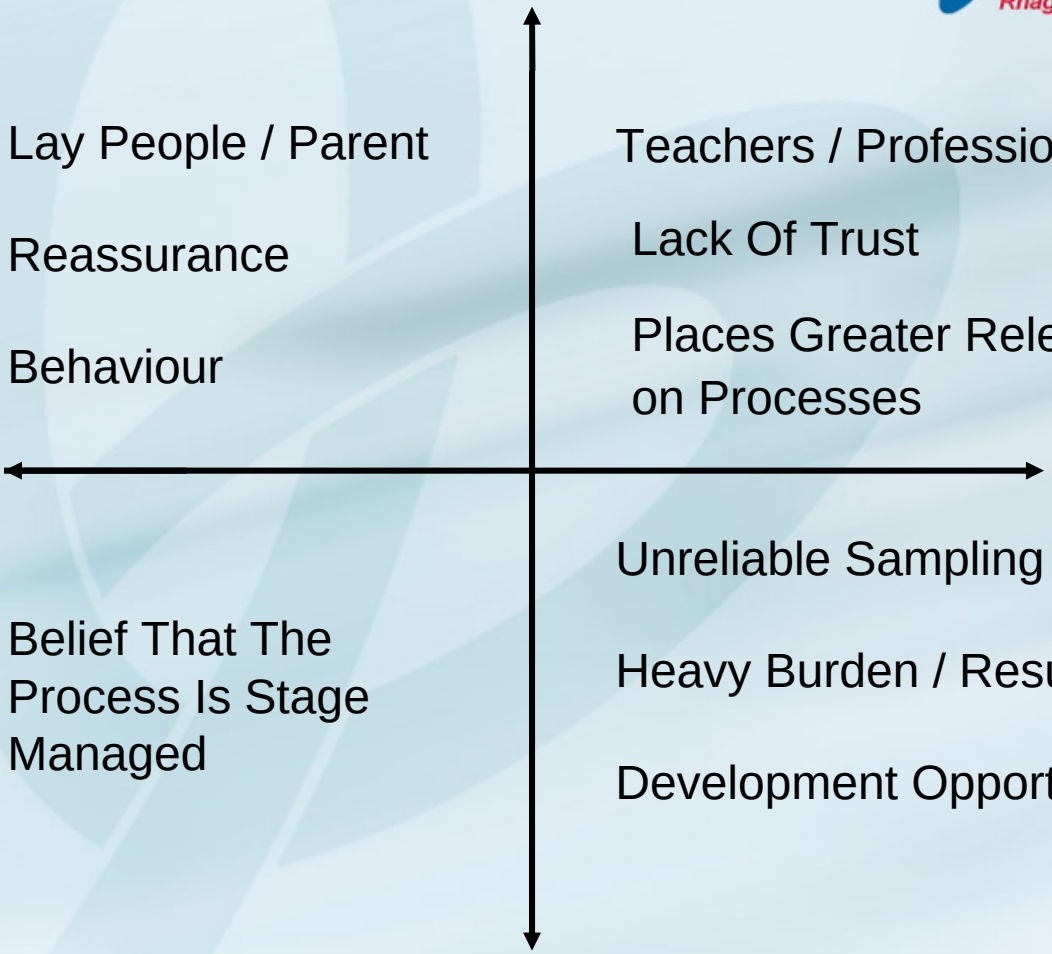
- Citizens suggest they would only use the information given a (very) negative school report (other provider services were seen to be less important) and/or to “vote with their feet”

Some tensions

- Rigour & relevance
- Reporting
- Participation

Rigour and Relevance

Spot checks



Ongoing Cycle / Process

Reporting

Lay people

- Softer measures
- Simple messages
- Relative judgements and expectations

Teachers / professionals

- “performance”
- Absolute judgements

Participation

- Professionals see inspection as “theirs”
- Lay people know a lot more about quality issues that they are given credit for – e.g. as employers and customers
- Learner involvement e.g. school council gathering attitudinal data?
- How professionals want “others” to engage – peers, laypeople, school representatives, community leaders?