

# Future of social care inspection

Consultation outcome and next steps

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This report gives a summary of the responses to Ofsted's 'Future of social care inspection' consultation and the changes we are making as a result.

The report sets out what we learned from the pilot inspections that tested the proposed social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

It also describes the next development steps for the arrangements for the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS).

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**Age group:** 0–19

**Published:** February 2017

**Reference no:** 170001



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## Introduction

1. This report sets out the responses to Ofsted's 'Future of social care inspection' consultation. Between 28 June and 9 September 2016, we sought the views of all interested parties through an initial online consultation and various engagement events. Since then, we have continued to engage with stakeholders, giving them further details of our proposals and receiving feedback from them so that inspections deliver high-quality evaluations of the progress and experiences of children and young people.
2. Ofsted is determined to reform inspection so that our inspections continue to meet the demands of an evolving social care sector. The reforms that we will introduce from April 2017<sup>1</sup> and January 2018<sup>2</sup> will ensure that our inspections are of high quality and of value to children, families, the profession and the wider public, are proportionate and have greatest impact where it is needed most.
3. We were pleased that we received broad support for our proposals from the sector for a new approach to the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) and for the introduction of a social care common inspection framework (SCCIF). The sections that follow in this report are a summary of issues raised in response to the proposals of the consultation and how Ofsted will address them.
4. We would like to thank all those who have fed back during this consultation period and who have taken part in our pilot inspections. We will continue to work closely with those involved in providing services to children to ensure that our inspections focus on the right things and give children, parents, carers, providers and the commissioners of services the information that they need.

## Consultation proposals

5. We consulted on the following proposals for changes to social care inspection:
  - principles for children's social care inspections:
    - focus on the things that matter most to children's lives
    - be consistent in our expectations of providers
    - focus on services that are less than good
  - a new approach to inspections of local authority children's services from 2018

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<sup>1</sup> Social care common inspection framework, Ofsted, February 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif).

<sup>2</sup> Inspection of local authority children's services, to be published in autumn 2017 for implementation from January 2018.

- a new common inspection framework for social care establishments, agencies, boarding schools, residential special schools and further education colleges (residential provision) that we inspect, from April 2017
  - changes to inspections of independent fostering agencies (IFAs), including a shorter notice period for inspections and earlier returns to IFAs judged as less than good.
6. The full consultation proposals can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-social-care-inspection](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-social-care-inspection).

## How we consulted

7. The findings in this report are based on the quantitative data from the responses to the online questionnaire and on qualitative data from consultative events, meetings and pilot inspections held between June 2016 and January 2017.
8. The online public consultation was open from 28 June to 9 September 2016. It was widely promoted on the Ofsted website and the wider media, including social media, and at national and regional conferences. The consultation document was available to complete online or to be submitted via email or by post. A total of 218 responses were received. The full response to the online consultation is in Annex 1.
9. During the online consultation, Ofsted hosted a number of events where we met approximately 250 sector representatives and social care employees. These events included:
- two meetings through the Ofsted social care national consultative forum, where we met with colleagues from across the children's social care sector
  - a number of face-to-face meetings where we met with mixed groups of colleagues from the sector, including local authority social workers, foster carers and IFA staff
  - several meetings with directors of children's services across the regions and a presentation at the national Association for Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) conference
  - webinars with representatives from residential holiday schemes for disabled children (RHSDC) and residential family centres (RFC)
  - webinars with voluntary adoption agency (VAA) representatives and one adoption support agency (ASA) representative
  - a meeting with the Alliance for Children in Care, a coalition of organisations that work to support children in care and care leavers

- discussion with representatives from LandEx<sup>3</sup>
  - specific sessions with 35 children and young people aged between 14 and 23.
10. Following the online consultation, Ofsted hosted focused consultation meetings with providers and stakeholder groups. We were able to discuss some of the initial feedback from the online consultation and provide greater detail of how the SCCIF might work in practice and our developing thinking in relation to ILACS.
  11. Ofsted also asked for providers to volunteer for pilot inspections in order to test our proposals for the SCCIF. Inspection pilots were held across a range of settings and we are very appreciative for the time and input from those who volunteered and those who were part of the final piloting process.
  12. Post-pilot engagement discussions were held with representatives from each pilot setting to gain their views on the inspection experience. In addition, they gave written evaluation feedback.

## **Consultation feedback and actions**

### **Principles of social care inspection**

#### **Summary of proposal**

13. We sought views on the three proposed principles that will underpin how we inspect children's services:
  - focus on the things that matter most to children's lives
  - be consistent in our expectations of providers
  - focus on services that are less than good.

#### **What people told us**

14. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the principle to focus on the things that matter most to children's lives.
15. There was similar widespread agreement among the different provider types about the principle to be consistent in our expectations of providers. One representative from a local authority commented that, 'being consistent is vital to being fair to all.'
16. While there was general support for the principle to focus on services that are less than good, a small proportion of respondents from several different

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<sup>3</sup> Landex (Land Based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence) is a member organisation for providers who deliver education and training in land-based occupational areas.

settings disagreed. Respondents, especially young people, raised concern that focus on these services exclusively could lead to strong providers weakening, especially where there have been significant changes taking place such as a change of leadership.

### **Our response**

17. We will adopt the first two principles, as proposed.
18. The principle of focusing on services that are less than good was not intended to mean that we will stop inspecting good and outstanding providers. Ofsted is committed to inspecting in a proportionate way. Returning more frequently to services that are less than good means that we will target those services most in need of improvement.
19. While proportionate inspection may lead to an intention for less frequent or shorter inspections, we will always keep the ability to go back to good and outstanding providers more quickly if we have concerns.
20. We will always consider returning sooner to providers who have recently undergone major changes or if we feel that their quality of service has declined.
21. To make our position clear, we have revised this principle to:
  - prioritise our work where improvement is needed most.
22. Details of how this and the inspection principles will be applied in practice to each setting will be fully explained within the SCCIF<sup>4</sup> and ILACS (when published later in 2017).

### **Inspection of local authority children's services**

23. We received strong support for all our proposals on the future inspections of local authority children's services. We feel that this gives us a helpful mandate to test what we proposed through pilot inspections during 2017.

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<sup>4</sup> Social care common inspection framework, Ofsted, February 2017;  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif).

## A proportionate approach to inspection

### *Summary of proposal*

24. We proposed to move from a single inspection applied universally to all local authorities to a more proportionate approach that takes account of earlier performance and current data and intelligence. This would be delivered through shorter inspections of those local authorities that were good or outstanding at their previous inspection.
25. We will continue with our current approach to local authorities judged inadequate: that is, we will continue with our quarterly monitoring visits to these local authorities and the next inspection will be either a single inspection (SIF) or a post-monitoring SIF as set out in the published guidance.<sup>5</sup>

### *What people told us*

26. There was strong support from local authorities for a proportionate approach.
27. There was less support from the broader group of respondents, but a large majority were still in agreement.
28. A proportionate approach is an effective way to target support where it is most needed and recognise where services are good.
29. There were also views that:
  - all local authorities should receive the same inspection
  - that past performance is not necessarily an indicator of current or future performance because standards can deteriorate quickly
  - if Ofsted spends less time looking at good performance, it will be less able to highlight and share good practice from which others can learn.
30. There was no clear consensus from any group of respondents on how the principle of proportionality should be applied. Two general models emerged from the consultation responses:
  - changing the length of inspection – the model proposed in the consultation – which would mean that all local authorities are inspected to the same timescales
  - changing the frequency of inspection – for example, inspecting good and outstanding local authorities every five years rather than every three – which would mean that all local authorities receive the same inspection.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Monitoring and re-inspecting local authority children's services judged inadequate: guidance for inspectors; Ofsted, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-childrens-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-childrens-services).

## **Modular inspections or focused visits**

### *Summary of proposal*

31. We proposed to carry out short 'modular' inspections to look at specific parts of the child's journey. These inspections would highlight good practice and check whether the quality of services has been maintained, improved or deteriorated. They would result in a narrative report that identifies strengths and areas for development. They would support a local authority's improvement journey up to its next inspection that would result in a new judgement ('judgement inspection').

### *What people told us*

32. There was strong support for modular inspections to monitor concerns, support improvement and highlight good practice.
33. If managed well, this aspect of the new programme has the potential to be responsive to challenges specific to each local authority and therefore add significant value to their improvement work.
34. Some respondents were concerned about the impact of more inspection. Short modular inspections between judgement inspections mean that inspectors could be on site more regularly. Concerns included the impact of preparing for inspection and the pressures of 'hosting' an inspection team.
35. Others were concerned about the range of inspection activities, for example the LA SEND programme (inspections of local area services for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities) and the joint targeted area inspections and how inspections would be scheduled.
36. Modular inspections would need to be focused to ensure that they are manageable and have sufficient depth and quality.
37. A small number of respondents urged caution about being too focused and inspecting areas of service in isolation; services often overlap and help the same children.

## **Our response**

38. We think that our proposed approach to inspection can be most easily understood when inspection is seen as one part of a system of activities to support a proportionate approach. Having listened to the feedback so far, we

propose that the system, for those local authorities judged to be requires improvement to be good or better,<sup>6</sup> will comprise:

- standard or short judgement inspections every three years to evaluate local authority children's services and provide graded judgements
  - focused visits between inspections, providing a narrative report that details strengths and areas for improvement
  - local authority self-evaluation of social work practice
  - reviews of data and intelligence
  - regular engagement about these activities between Ofsted regional directors, inspectors and local authorities.
39. Each of these components is discussed in separate sections of this report and will be further developed throughout 2017.
40. We have carefully considered the merits of a proportionate programme that would result in some local authorities being inspected less frequently. However, we do not intend to pursue this approach because we share concerns raised by respondents about the risk of standards declining quickly – our recent inspections have shown that this can happen.
41. We have decided to rename 'modular inspections' as 'focused visits' because we think this more clearly describes our intentions and distinguishes more clearly between inspections where we will make judgements and visits where we will provide a narrative report of our findings.
42. We recognise concerns that focused visits alongside judgement inspections may mean that inspectors are on site more frequently. However, we think that the new system will enable us to minimise the overall burden on local authorities by allowing us to be more responsive in the way we inspect and be more aligned with local improvement.
43. To test the effectiveness of the inspection arrangements, we will pilot:
- standard inspections (two weeks' fieldwork) and short inspections (one week's fieldwork)
  - focused visits to establish the right balance between depth and breadth of evaluation and to maximise impact.
44. In addition, we will:
- review the information we ask local authorities to give to inspectors and make best use of information they produce to manage their day-to-day

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<sup>6</sup> Those authorities found to be inadequate will continue to have quarterly monitoring followed by a single inspection as their potential route out of inadequate.

business; unless absolutely necessary, we will avoid asking for any information to be created specifically for any inspection or visit

- focus our methodology so that the greatest proportion of inspectors' time is spent evaluating the impact of frontline practice with children and young people and their families, and social workers and their managers.

## **The judgements we will make**

### *Summary of proposal*

45. We proposed to grade the overall effectiveness of local authority children's services in both short and standard judgement inspections. We asked whether we should also make judgements on parts of children's services, for example specific judgements for children in need of help and protection and achieving permanence for children looked after. For focused visits, we will report through a narrative only.

### *What people told us*

46. The majority of local authority responses agreed that we should make graded judgements on short or standard inspections, although this proportion was lower than those from other groups of respondents.
47. Half the respondents agreed that the focused visits should have narrative findings without a graded judgement.
48. A third of respondents felt that the focused visits should result in a grade.
49. Local authority respondents tended to be more in favour of the narrative-only approach for focused visits, but around a fifth of this group supported grading.
50. Graded judgements can be useful in clearly sign-posting good practice from which others can learn and can give an incentive for improvement.
51. In addition to answering the consultation questions, respondents also said that they felt that judgements, particularly the judgement of inadequate, can have a negative impact on recruitment, retention and morale that can then hinder improvement.

### *Our response*

52. We will retain the current four-point grading scale when we make judgements on inspections.
53. However, we do want to test whether an overall effectiveness judgement adds value or whether it is better just to grade the key practice areas: children in need of help and protection, children looked after, care leavers and achieving permanence and the impact of leaders and managers.

54. We will make a decision on the most appropriate graded judgement areas for the new inspections following the pilot inspections and taking account of the views of the local authorities that participate in the pilot inspections, ADCS, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) and the Local Government Association (LGA) We will also discuss this with the Department for Education (DfE) and ministers to ensure that they have the information they need to make decisions about intervention and about the quality of practice in the sector more widely.
55. For focused visits, we will pilot the methodology but we are already convinced that these will be narrative-only reports as outlined in the consultation.

### **Local authority self-evaluation of practice**

#### *Summary of proposal*

56. We proposed that local authority self-evaluation of frontline social work practice should inform the timing and focus of inspection. We proposed that this should be shared annually with Ofsted and that the models should be developed by the sector to support improvement and not designed by Ofsted to inform inspection.

#### *What people told us*

57. Any self-evaluation model should not be defined by Ofsted. This would risk creating a system where self-evaluation is provided only for inspection, which could undermine its integrity and its value in supporting improvement.
58. It is important to balance local ways of working with a degree of national consistency.
59. Some degree of consistency is desirable to support a fair application of the new arrangements.
60. Focusing self-evaluation only on frontline practice could limit Ofsted's understanding of how leadership decisions, wider corporate factors and other services might enhance or hinder effective social work practice.
61. Ofsted should use information from existing sources and not seek to unnecessarily create new sources.
62. This approach could allow local authorities to 'hide' practice that they fear may adversely affect their inspection outcome.
63. There was no clear consensus about the time of year that is best to provide a self-evaluation to Ofsted.
64. Effective self-evaluation is continuous and requesting it at a point in time may undermine this.

### *Our response*

65. In recent months, we have been working closely with a sector group that includes representatives from ADCS, LGA, Solace, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) and the Association of Independent LSCB Chairs to develop a model for self-evaluation that addresses the perspectives outlined above. This collaborative approach is helping us to understand collectively what Ofsted needs to know in order to inspect and what activity local authorities already undertake that could provide this.
66. We propose to ask for the outcomes of practice audits that the local authority has undertaken to support its own improvement. This will help us to understand how effectively the local authority evaluates the impact of its work with individual children and how it learns lessons from the wider range of audits. It will also help us to test how the local authority identifies and prioritises the focus of its self-evaluation according to local need. This information will inform the timing of inspections and visits and the lines of enquiry that inspectors will pursue.
67. We will continue to work with this sector group to identify those wider factors that tell us about the quality of their work. However, we remain committed to only asking local authorities to send us information that already exists that will help inspectors to understand the quality and impact of social work practice with children, young people and their families.
68. In addition to pilot inspections, a number of local authorities have volunteered to test self-evaluation models to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Having opportunities to test the processes that support this new proportionate system of inspection is a very positive and welcome step forward.

## **The new judgement inspections**

### *Summary of proposal*

69. We asked whether each judgement inspection (standard and short) should look at the experiences of children from several specific groups to give inspectors a reasonable overview of the impact of the local authority's children's services. We also asked whether inspections and visits should be unannounced or have a short notice period.

### *What people told us*

70. Inspectors should evaluate the experiences of the children as set out in the consultation document. However, there were a range of views on how we should group children, for example whether care leavers should be seen as a separate group from children looked after.
71. There were mixed views on whether the inspections and visits should be unannounced or have a short notice period.

### *Our response*

72. We are still considering the responses to this proposal and will test different approaches through the pilot inspections to ensure that inspections look at a sufficiently representative range of children's experiences. We are committed to all inspections having the minimum practical notice period and we will test this through the pilot inspections.
73. We will provide a further report on our learning from the pilots when we publish the framework in autumn 2017 and will address this aspect of our proposals then.

## **A social care common inspection framework**

### *Summary of proposal*

74. We proposed that we should implement a social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) for the following settings:
  - children's homes, including secure children's homes
  - independent fostering agencies
  - boarding schools and residential special schools
  - voluntary adoption agencies
  - adoption support agencies
  - residential family centres
  - residential holiday schemes for disabled children
  - residential provision in further education colleges.

### *What people told us*

75. The vast majority of respondents agreed with this proposal, made many positive comments and welcomed it as a positive step forward.
76. It will create a more level playing field.
77. There will be greater simplicity and understanding of the inspection process.
78. The emphasis on progress and experiences for children was widely welcomed.
79. There was some concern that not all of the aspects of the SCCIF seem relevant to all types of service provider (e.g. voluntary adoption agencies, residential holiday schemes).
80. A common inspection framework might miss the unique aspects of different types of settings and how they are run.

### *Our response*

81. We will be implementing the SCCIF in the above settings, as proposed.
82. The SCCIF is not a 'one-size-fits all' framework. Importantly, its methodology and evaluation criteria will take account of the distinct and unique aspects of each type of provider, while avoiding unnecessary differences between settings.
83. We have consulted extensively on the details of the SCCIF, including the content of the evaluation criteria. We also tested the criteria during pilot inspections, which demonstrated that the SCCIF worked well across the different types of provision.
84. We were pleased to receive generally positive feedback from providers, who felt that the inspection methodology and evaluation criteria were relevant, clear and proportionate.
85. We have made several changes to the grade descriptors and guidance that were originally drafted in response to specific comments, mainly to address issues of clarity, proportionality and context. For example, we have clarified what we mean by 'progress' for children and other service users. We will always consider individual starting points and circumstances during SCCIF inspections. Elsewhere, we have made amendments that show more clearly that inspectors will take into account the specific functions and accountabilities of the different establishments and agencies.

## **Judgements under the SCCIF**

### *Summary of proposal*

86. We proposed that we should apply the same judgement structure for all SCCIF inspections:
  - the overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account:
    - how well children and young people are helped and protected
    - the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

### *What people told us*

87. There was general agreement with the planned focus on the experiences and progress of children and young people during inspections. This was consistent with many providers' own objectives.
88. Some providers who do not work directly with or have extended contact with children questioned how the proposal to focus on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people would apply to them.

89. One residential holiday scheme provider pointed out that their contact with children was limited to only a few days during a child's holiday, limiting the provider's ability to have a lasting impact on children's lives
90. Some respondents asked how we would evaluate individual children's progress from their 'starting point'.
91. The proposal to judge settings on how well children and young people are helped and protected was widely welcomed as prioritising children's safety.
92. There was strong support for a judgement of the effectiveness of leaders and managers.
93. The majority of respondents from adoption support agencies reminded us that they provided services wholly or mostly to adults – the judgement structure needed to take account of this.
94. The SCCIF should make specific reference to the needs of disabled children and those from other vulnerable groups.
95. Inspections of secure children's homes should continue to include a specific judgement on children's learning outcomes.
96. The relationship between the provider and local authority and their areas of accountability needed to be acknowledged clearly within the separate judgement areas, but especially how children are helped and protected and the effectiveness of managers.

#### *Our response*

97. Ofsted will be implementing the judgement structure as set out in the consultation document. We believe that the proposed judgements provide simplicity and consistency across settings and focus on what matters most for delivering outcomes for children.
98. Evidence from the pilot inspections, including feedback from participating providers, showed that inspectors were able to focus more easily on the experiences and progress of children and young people when applying the judgements. One IFA that took part in a pilot inspection commented that the SCCIF allowed a sharper focus on 'outcomes for children, how children experience being in care and with our agency, rather than the processes that are in place to evidence this.'
99. The SCCIF as it relates to voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies and residential family centres, will reflect the fact that these providers also work directly with adults. These inspections will consider, as appropriate, the experiences of adult service users.

100. The specific needs of vulnerable children and groups, including disabled children, will also be addressed where appropriate.
101. Within the detailed evaluation criteria and guidance, we will make the specific purpose and accountabilities of the provider clear, while retaining our focus on the impact on and contribution that the service makes to the lives of children, young people and other service users.
102. For inspections of secure children's homes, we have decided not to remove the current judgement of 'outcomes in education and related-learning activities', as originally proposed. We have listened to some concerns that this might dilute the strength of attention paid to the education of young people in secure children's homes. We also consider that it is best not to implement any change of this type now so we can take full account of any further consideration of what inspection of the secure estate should look like, following the publication of the government's response to Charlie Taylor's review of the youth justice system in December 2016.<sup>7</sup>

## **Inspections of independent fostering agencies**

### *Summary of proposal*

103. We proposed that we should re-inspect independent fostering agencies judged as inadequate within six to 12 months and within 12 to 18 months for those judged as requiring improvement.

### *What people said*

104. Nearly all respondents, mostly IFAs, agreed with our proposals. They welcomed the opportunity for agencies to get to good earlier than is usually possible under the existing inspection framework. Those who did not agree felt that we should return to inspect weak agencies even earlier than we had proposed.

### *Our response*

105. We will be implementing our proposal that we should usually return to IFAs judged as inadequate within six to 12 months and to those judged as requiring improvement to be good within 12 to 18 months. We think that this should give agencies enough time to make the necessary improvements. We will return sooner if we think it is necessary.
106. This will make inspection of IFAs more proportionate and will allow us to target our resources on those agencies where performance is not yet good. The frequency of all inspections, including for those judged as good or outstanding,

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<sup>7</sup> For full details, including Charlie Taylor's review report, see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-youth-justice-system](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-youth-justice-system).

will be determined by regular risk assessment. We will retain the right to return earlier than normally expected if we have any concerns.

107. We will continue to inspect good or outstanding agencies at least once in a three-year cycle.
108. From April 2017, we are introducing a rolling three-year programme of inspection. This means that rather than a static three-year cycle where all IFAs are inspected within the same three-year window, each IFA will usually be inspected in the three year period following its individual inspection. The three-year period commences on the 1 April in the year following its individual inspection. For example, for agencies inspected between April 2016 and March 2017, the three-year cycle ends on 31 March 2020. There are likely to be some variances as we move from one system to another. We think this will support improvement and meet the minimum inspection frequency.

#### *Summary of proposal*

109. We proposed that we should reduce the notice period we give for inspections of independent fostering agencies from 10 working days to one working day.

#### *What people told us*

110. It is hard to be inspection-ready at all times.
111. It will be difficult to arrange a timetable for inspection, involving inspectors, agency staff, foster carers and children, in such a reduced timescale.
112. Agencies, especially smaller agencies, rely on the availability of a small number of key people to enable them to provide their best evidence.
113. The IFA notice period should be brought more into line with our other social care inspections.
114. Foster carers, children and young people felt strongly that settings should receive little or no notice when inspected, to ensure that Ofsted viewed settings as they really are, with less time to prepare for inspection.

#### *Our response*

115. We took account of the initial concerns and adapted our plans for piloting a shorter notice period accordingly. We piloted four SCCIF inspections of IFAs in order to gain a better understanding of the likely impact of the shorter notice period. We undertook two pilots that provided only one day's notice in line with our consultation proposals, but we also undertook two pilots that gave three days' notice in order to provide a comparison of the impact.
116. We were glad to have the opportunity to meet with representatives from more than 60 IFAs in December 2016 to discuss the findings from the pilot

inspections and the detail of how the SCCIF will work in practice. Providers who participated in the pilot inspections were able to share their positive experiences of the shorter notice and the SCCIF in general.

117. We have decided that, from April 2017, we will give IFAs two working days' notice of inspection. We believe that this is the minimum notice required to support an effective inspection that will provide a clear and realistic picture of the day-to-day operation and impact of the agency. This will harmonise notice periods more closely with the majority of Ofsted's inspections and reduce as much as possible the demands on providers and staff to spend time preparing for inspection.
118. Evidence from the pilot inspections showed that Ofsted is able to undertake effective SCCIF inspections of IFAs with short notice. Participating agencies felt that inspectors had been able to report fairly and accurately on the strengths and weaknesses of the service, with appropriate focus on the experiences and progress of children.
119. We agree that, while the pilots that tested one day's notice were successful, a little more time is needed for agencies to prepare and plan for inspections.
120. Some IFAs experienced logistical difficulties in sharing large amounts of information electronically with inspectors during the short notice period. We will resolve these difficulties by using a cloud-based system that allows prompt and secure sharing of information. We already use a system like this successfully during our inspections of local authority children's services.
121. We are aware that agencies are concerned that some key staff may not always be able to be present during inspections. However, even with longer notice periods, certain key staff may not always be available. We will explain as clearly as possible ahead of inspections the information that inspectors will need to assist the inspection and to ensure that providers are able to provide their best evidence.

## **Next steps**

### **Inspection of local authority children's services**

122. The local authority children's services inspection framework will continue to be piloted throughout the summer of 2017 and will be published in the autumn of 2017 for implementation from January 2018.

### **Social care common inspection framework**

123. The social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) will be published in February 2017 ahead of its implementation from April 2017.
124. We will ensure that all inspectors receive training in the new framework ahead of implementation. We particularly valued the contributions that stakeholders

have made to this consultation and we are currently exploring ways in which we can involve stakeholders, including providers, more actively in our ongoing training and development for our inspectors.

125. We will review the implementation of the SCCIF but we would not propose to make any changes before April 2018.

## **Annex 1. Outcomes data from the online consultation**

126. The responses to the multiple choice and non-text questions in the online consultation questionnaire are provided in a separate data spreadsheet.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Future of social care inspection – consultation outcomes data, February 2017;  
[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-social-care-inspection](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-social-care-inspection)



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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No. 170001

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