

Responses to Ofsted's consultation on changes to publication of statistics reporting on children's centre inspections

A report on the responses to consultation

This document reports on responses to a consultation document on Ofsted's proposals for changes to the publication of statistics reporting on children's centre inspections. The consultation closed on 24 October 2014.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

1. Ofsted currently produces children's centre official statistics that report on inspection outcomes. This release is published quarterly on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/collections/childrens-centres-statistics
2. Ofsted consulted to seek views on new arrangements for the frequency and content of publishing children's centres official statistics. We proposed to reduce the frequency of publication of these statistics to twice a year, and to remove table 4 and chart 1, which relate to inspections carried out in the most recent time period.
3. This consultation did not relate to how children's centre inspections are carried out, or to the publication of individual inspection reports.
4. The consultation opened on 11 September 2014 and closed on 24 October 2014.

The consultation method

5. The consultation was published on the Ofsted website and promoted on Twitter. Responses were collected by email and through online forms. We did not receive any postal responses. A total of 35 separate responses were received and considered.

Summary of findings

6. The feedback was largely positive to the proposed changes to the frequency and content of children's centre official statistics:
 - 85% of respondents agreed with changing the frequency of publication to twice a year.
 - 85% of respondents agreed with removing table 4, which presents data relating to the inspections in the most recent time period broken down by local authority.
 - 86% of respondents agreed with removing chart 1, which presents data relating to inspections in the most recent time period.
7. Based on these findings, changes will take effect for the statistics that will be published in March 2015 to report on inspections completed by 31 December 2014.

Findings in full

8. Ofsted received 35 separate responses, 17 of these were from organisations including city councils and county councils. Other responses were from headteachers, teachers, social workers and other early years sector staff as well as parents.

Proposal 1: Changing the frequency of the publication

Ofsted proposed reducing the publication of children's centre official statistics to twice a year, reporting on inspections completed from 1 April to 31 August and inspections completed from 1 September to 31 March.

9. Twenty nine of 34 responses (85%) reported that reducing the frequency of publishing these statistics to twice a year would be enough to meet their needs. Two didn't know if this change would continue to meet their needs or not.
10. Three of the 34 respondents said that this would not be sufficient to meet their needs. One commented that they use the information we publish to produce their quarterly reports.
11. Despite the reduced frequency, users will continue to be able to analyse data published for inspections carried out within any time frame for which data are published by filtering on the provider level inspection data.

Proposal 2: Changing the layout and presentation of the publication

Ofsted proposed removing table 4 from the children's centre official statistics published as most data items in it are zero. The information shown will still be available to users by filtering on the underlying data that Ofsted will continue to publish.

12. Out of the 33 responses to this proposal, 28 (85%) reported that removing table 4 would not impact on their these publications meeting their needs. Positive comments noted that this table was unnecessary and that the information would still be available by filtering on the provider level data.
13. Four said that this would not be sufficient to meet their needs. One respondent commented on the usefulness of comparing numbers of new inspections across local authorities; this is possible by filtering on the provider-level inspection data that Ofsted will continue to publish.

Ofsted proposed removing chart 1 from the children's centre official statistics as the data shown only relate to a small, targeted sample of inspections. The information shown will still be available to users in a table form that we will continue to provide.

14. Thirty of 35 responses (86%) reported that removing chart 1 would not impact on meeting their needs. Comments noted the information would still be available in table 1, and that chart 2 was more useful in any case.
15. Four said that this would not be sufficient to meet their needs, but did not add any comments to explain why or outline what would meet their needs. The data from chart 1 will still be available in table 1.
16. In answer to the open question relating to other ways in which official statistics could be improved, some respondents suggested that providing comparisons across time and more data broken down by local authority would be helpful. Users can access this information by filtering on the data files and is already available in graphical form in Data View: www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk/
17. The majority of respondents heard about the consultation from Ofsted's electronic channels, including the website, email alerts and twitter feed.
18. All 35 respondents agreed with the statements: 'I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand,' 'I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website' and 'I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.' Only two disagreed with the statement: 'I had enough information about the consultation topic.'

The way forward

19. The next children's centre official statistics will report on inspections completed by 31 December 2014, and will be published in March 2015 with the changes resulting from this consultation. The publication will continue to include a key findings document and provider level data.
20. Users will continue to be able to analyse inspections carried out within any time frame for which data are published by filtering on the provider-level inspection data, which we will continue to publish.
21. The subsequent publications will report on inspections completed by:
 - 31 March 2015,
 - 31 August 2015
 - and so on.
22. This pattern will continue, publishing data twice a year on inspections completed by 31 March and 31 August.
23. As noted, this consultation will not change actual inspections of children's centres or the publication of individual inspection reports.