

Changes to Ofsted's statistical reporting on inspections and outcomes for children's homes and local authority children's services

A report on the responses to consultation

This is a report on the response to the consultation on our proposals for revisions to the frequency and content of social care inspection official statistics and management information. This report sets out the findings of the consultation and explains the changes that will be made.

This consultation ran from 25 February to 29 March 2019.

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Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

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Introduction

1. This report summarises the responses to Ofsted's consultation 'Changes to Ofsted's statistical reporting on inspections and outcomes for children's homes and local authority children's services'.
2. The consultation ran from 25 February to 29 March 2019.
3. We sought to gather the views of all interested parties and the consultation was open to the public.
4. We consulted on the following proposals for changes to our statistical reporting, to be introduced in summer 2019:
 - changing the period covered by the local authority and children's homes official statistics from six months to five months. This is to align it with the period for other remits (types of provider we inspect) and with the period covered by the Ofsted Annual Report
 - removing the interactive tables from the underlying data
 - reducing the frequency of publishing children's homes management information, from quarterly to biannually.

The consultation method

5. The consultation was open to the public and we promoted it using a variety of methods, such as:
 - regular posts from the @ofstednews twitter account
 - ofstednews email updates
 - emails to key stakeholders, such as local authorities
 - the Ofsted Directors of Children's Services monthly update.
6. Responses were collected through online survey. We also received one postal response, concerning only one of the proposals.

Summary of findings

7. A total of five separate responses were received and considered. Some responses included additional comments.
8. The feedback to the proposed changes to the frequency and content of social care inspection official statistics and management information was mixed but overall positive:

- two of the five respondents agreed with changing the period covered by the local authority and children’s homes official statistics from six months to five months, and three neither agreed nor disagreed
 - three of the five respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with removing the interactive tables from the underlying data, and two disagreed
 - three of the five respondents agreed with reducing the frequency of publishing children’s homes management information, from quarterly to biannually, one disagreed, and one neither agreed nor disagreed.
9. Based on these findings, we will make all the changes as proposed in the consultation.

Findings in full

10. In response to the consultation, we received five responses. Of these, two were responding on behalf of an organisation. One of these was a children’s home, and one was a charity/professional organisation.

Proposal 1: Changing the period covered by one of the releases

- Ofsted proposed changing the period covered by the local authority and children’s homes official statistics from six months to five months. This is to align it with the period for other remits (types of provider we inspect) and with the period covered by the Ofsted Annual Report.
11. Two of the five respondents agreed, one strongly, with the proposal to change the period covered by the local authority and children’s homes official statistics from six months to five months. The other three respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. The additional comments that supported the proposal included: ‘This makes sense to have the alignment’.

Proposal 2: Removing the interactive tables

- Ofsted proposed to remove the interactive tables from the underlying data Excel files published alongside the ‘Children’s social care in England’ release and the ‘Local authority and children’s homes in England inspections and outcomes’ release to streamline the production of the releases.
12. Three of the five respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal to remove the interactive tables from the underlying data. The other two respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal.
13. One of the two respondents who disagreed with this proposal provided extensive comments on the use of children’s homes data and the accessibility and the use of access afforded by the interactive tables. The respondent noted that, although the data will still be available in the provider-level Excel files, these are ‘vast, off-putting and many will find them difficult and time-

consuming to consult and analyse'. They also added 'We need tools to help professionals easily monitor the sector and children's experiences within it'.

14. Based on the responses to the proposal, we will proceed with removing the interactive tables from the underlying data files, but we will introduce additional guidance that will help users to access and analyse the provider-level data quickly.

Proposal 3: Reducing the publication of children's homes management information from quarterly to biannually

- Ofsted proposed to reduce the frequency of publishing children's homes management information, from quarterly to biannually. The proposal was to streamline the number of management information publications, but still publish the data quarterly, as part of the statistical publications.
15. Three of the five respondents agreed, one strongly, with the proposal to reduce the frequency of publishing children's homes management information. One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed, and the other respondent strongly disagreed. Their additional comment included 'the data is useful to us and reducing the frequency will limit our ability to react to the market'.
 16. Based on the responses to this question, we will reduce the number of children's homes management information publications. We will still publish the data quarterly so that the reduction in the frequency of the separate children's homes publications will not impact on the accessibility of the data.

The way forward

17. As a result of this consultation, we will be amending our statistical releases as detailed under questions one to three. See the full consultation document with proposals here: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-ofsteds-statistical-reporting-on-inspections-and-outcomes-for-childrens-homes-and-local-authority-childrens-services.
18. We are aiming to introduce all of the changes for the official statistics release that we will publish in late June 2019, which is based on inspections carried out by the end of March 2019.
19. We will publish 'Local authority and children's homes in England inspections and outcomes' official statistics in November 2019 and will report on inspections of children's homes and local authority children's services from 1 April 2019 to 31 August 2019. We will then publish this on an annual basis in November of each year. The publication will continue to include a main findings document and provider-level data.
20. We will remove the interactive tables from the 'Children's social care in England' national statistics and from the 'Local authority and children's homes in England

inspections and outcomes' official statistics. We are aiming to introduce this change for the release that we will publish in late June 2019, which is based on inspections carried out by the end of March 2019. Users will continue to be able to analyse data within any time frame for which data is published by using the provider-level inspection data. We will also publish additional guidance to make the data more accessible and user friendly.

21. We will be publishing children's home management information biannually. We will publish the next release, covering April to June 2019 inspections, in August 2019, and the next one, on inspections completed between September and December 2019, in February 2020.
22. As noted, this consultation will not change actual inspections of children's social care providers or the publication of individual inspection reports.



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