

Social care official statistics

A report on the responses to consultation

This is the report on a consultation that sought views on new proposed arrangements for the frequency and content of social care inspection official statistics. We proposed to combine the four publications listed above into a single report, reduce the frequency of publication of the children's homes statistics, and to introduce management information in the interim periods. In addition, we proposed to simplify the releases.

The consultation opened on 10 November 2014 and closed on 8 December 2014

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Introduction

1. Ofsted currently publishes seven different official statistics publications based on social care inspections and data collections. These are published on a six-monthly or quarterly frequency throughout the year and can be found on the GOV.UK website [here](#).
2. Ofsted recently conducted a [consultation](#) asking for views on proposed changes to a number of the social care official statistics publications. The publications concerned were:
 - children's homes inspections and outcomes
 - children's social care (excluding children's homes) inspections and outcomes
 - social care providers and places
 - local authority children's services inspections and outcomes.
3. The consultation aimed to seek views on new arrangements for the frequency and content of social care inspection official statistics. We proposed to combine the four publications listed above into one annual report, reduce the frequency of publication of the children's homes statistics to twice a year, and to introduce management information in the interim periods. In addition, we proposed simplifying the releases by removing quarterly reporting within the releases.
4. The consultation did not relate to Ofsted's publications of statistics from the data collections for fostering, adoption or children looked after placements. The consultation opened on 10 November 2015 and closed on 8 December 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.
6. Further to this, key contacts at the Department for Education (DfE) and the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) were also contacted directly and asked for their input.
7. A total of four separate responses were received and considered.

Summary of findings

8. The feedback was largely positive to the proposed changes to the frequency and content of social care inspection official statistics:
 - three of the four respondents agreed with combining the four publications together into one report

- all four respondents agreed with merging the four existing publications into one to add context and insight
 - three of the four respondents agreed with changing the frequency of publication to produce one annual report and one six-monthly report (plus management information).
9. Based on these findings, changes will take effect for the statistics that will be published in June 2015 to report on inspections completed by 31 March 2014. The pattern of publication is outlined below.

Findings in full

10. In response to the consultation, we received four responses. Of these, three were responding on behalf of an organisation. One of these was a children's home, one was a local authority children's services and one was a group offering therapeutic children's services.

Proposal 1: Changing the frequency of the publication

Ofsted proposed reducing the frequency of four of our social care official statistics releases, to produce one annual report and one six-monthly report, plus additional management information.

11. Three of the four respondents agreed with the proposal to produce one annual report and one six-monthly report. The other respondent didn't agree. There were no comments on this question.

Proposal 2: Combining the four current social care official statistics publications together

Ofsted proposed to combine the releases on social care inspection outcomes, local authority children's services inspection outcomes and providers and places, in order to allow more joined up reporting.

12. Three of the four respondents agreed with the proposal to streamline the releases and produce one annual report. The other respondent answered that they didn't know if they agreed with the proposal or not.

Proposal 3: Streamlining the releases

Ofsted proposed simplifying the way in which outputs are presented on the website, removing some inspection tables and charts to focus more on the state of nation analysis, and replacing current provider-level inspection files with one comprehensive file containing registration and inspection information.

13. Three of the respondents agreed with the proposal to simplify the releases, specifically to remove the ability to drill down to local authority and regional

level data for all the current tables, which are often zeroes or suppressed. The fourth respondent did not agree. There were no comments on this question.

14. Opinions about the proposal to remove the quarterly breakdown and report only the numbers at the end of the latest reporting period for the six-monthly children's home release were more mixed. Two of the respondents agreed, one disagreed and one did not know. The respondent who disagreed stated that quarterly data was useful to evaluate seasonal changes in demand for placements. The underlying data will, though, be available to allow this analysis to be undertaken by stakeholders.
15. All four respondents supported the proposal of combining the releases together, and bringing registration and inspection data together to report on them at the same point in time to add insight.
16. In answer to the open question relating to other ways in which official statistics could be improved, one respondent commented that it would be useful to have provider data broken down into regions as it is currently time consuming to get this regional picture. Another suggestion was to have more focus on positive outcomes and not just negative.
17. Only two of the respondents answered the questions on how they found answering the survey. Both the respondents agreed that they found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website and that they would be happy to take part in future consultations. Only one of the respondents agreed that they found the consultation information clear and easy to understand and that they had enough information about the consultation topic. The other respondent neither agreed nor disagreed.

The way forward

18. Following on from the consultation, the social care team is planning to put the proposed changes into place for releases for 2015 onwards. The first official statistics publication, incorporating social care inspection outcomes, children's home inspection outcomes, social care providers and places and local authority children's services inspection outcomes, will be published in July 2015, covering inspections completed by 31 March 2015. This will then be published on an annual basis in June of each year, with an additional children's homes only release in December each year covering inspections completed by 30 September. The publication will continue to include a key findings document and provider-level data.
19. 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.

20. We will be publishing children's home management information on a quarterly basis. The next release, covering September to December 2014 inspections, will be published in March 2015, and a subsequent one, on inspections completed between January and March 2015, in July 2015. This greater frequency of publication of inspection outcome data will allow users greater access to these data throughout the year.
21. As noted, this consultation will not change actual inspections of children's social care providers or the publication of individual inspection reports.