



Department  
for Education

# **Joint targeted reviews of services to protect children**

**Government consultation response**

**October 2015**

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## Introduction

The Government's report *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation* (March 2015) set out its intention to deliver a new system of joint multi-agency reviews, to assess more effectively how local agencies are working in a co-ordinated manner to protect children and young people. These reviews will be conducted jointly by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and the Care Quality Commission.

This consultation sought the views of interested parties on proposed amendments to the provisions of the Joint Area Reviews (JAR) Regulations.

The amendments reflect the joint nature of the review, and the need for relevant agencies to collaborate in the development of a written response, if one is deemed necessary.

The consultation was posted online with participants able to submit their responses by post, email or via an electronic form.

Ofsted conducted its own parallel consultation on a draft framework document, setting out how joint targeted reviews will operate in practice.

## **Summary of responses received and the Government's response**

The consultation attracted five responses from a range of participants, including local authorities, a trade union and a government department. For all questions, the majority of respondents agreed with the Government's proposals. There was no strong opposition to any of the proposals. The Government is therefore proceeding with the proposals set out in the consultation, subject to one exception. This relates to arrangements for the distribution of the report following a review. The consultation proposed removing the requirement for this to be sent to a local radio station and a newspaper, and the majority of respondents agreed to this. However, the new regulations retain this requirement, on the grounds that it is consistent with the Government's transparency agenda..

## **Main findings from the consultation**

The low number of responses suggests that there is no strong opposition to the Government's proposals to revoke and replace, with some amendments, the existing Joint Area Review Regulations.

## Question analysis

### Question 1: Do you agree that the requirement for a summary for children can be removed from the JAR Regulations?

Most respondents felt that it was not necessary that a children's summary be produced. One commented that the requirement should remain in the Regulations and that communicating directly with children and young people is a significant factor in enabling their participation and engagement.

	Total	Percent
Agree	4	80%
Disagree	1	20%

### Government response

Ofsted already produces summaries of inspections for children and young people, although not required by law to do so. It has made clear its intention to do the same for reports following joint targeted reviews. For this reason, the Government does not intend to include a statutory requirement for this to happen but will proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document.

### Question 2: Do you agree that the requirement for the report to be sent to a local radio station and a local newspaper can be removed from the JAR Regulations?

Most respondents felt that, because the reports are easily accessible and generally reported across a wide range of media, this requirement could be removed. However one respondent did not agree with this, stating that it would go against the Government's transparency agenda.

	Total	Percent
Agree	4	80%
Disagree	1	20%

### Government response

Because of the importance that the Government places on transparency, this requirement will be retained in the JAR Regulations.

### **Question 3: Rather than requiring agencies to make available a copy of the report at their offices, do you agree that the JAR Regulations should instead require them to make the report available on their websites?**

One respondent commented that this requirement should be commensurate with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	4	80%
Disagree	1	20%

### **Government response**

All agencies are required to publish reports under their own publication scheme. There is provision to charge for information made available through publication schemes, but those charges are made clear under the schemes concerned. The Government intends to proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document.

### **Question 4: Do you agree that Ofsted should have the power to determine whether a response is required, and if so from whom?**

Respondents generally agreed with this proposal.

One respondent felt that a single joint response should be co-ordinated by the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in line with Ofsted's suggested approach for joint targeted inspections. Furthermore, the respondent felt that if the framework is being used to conduct a single agency inspection of the local authority, then it should be stated that the Director of Children's Services should co-ordinate the response.

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	4	80%
Disagree	1	20%

## Government response

The Government will proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document. Ofsted's own framework document will set out the way in which inspectorates will collaborate in the drafting of the report following a review.

### **Question 5: Do you agree that the Regulations should not seek to prescribe an exhaustive list of copy recipients for the written response?**

Most respondents agreed that distribution of the written response to an inspection report should be restricted to the participating agencies regarding the initial inspection rather than a prescribed list.

One respondent felt that the written response should be sent to one body for distribution to other relevant bodies.

	Total	Percent
Agree	4	80%
Disagree	1	20%

## Government response

Because the written response will be published by all agencies subject to review and will be widely accessible, the Government does not intend to prescribe an exhaustive list of copy recipients. It will therefore proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document.

### **Question 6: Do you agree that all agencies involved in the joint review should publish the written response?**

All respondents agreed that all agencies involved should publish the written response with one commenting that it aids transparency.

However, one respondent felt that this should be the case only if it is a joint targeted inspection. If the framework is used to undertake a single agency inspection (as set out in Ofsted's parallel consultation) then the responsibility to publish the response should lie with the Local Authority.

	Total	Percent
Agree	5	100%
Disagree	0	00%

### Government response

Because there is a consensus the Government intends to proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document.

### Question 7: Do you agree that all inspectorates should have the power to obtain information from the various persons and bodies being reviewed (including the LSCB) if necessary?

Respondents agreed that inspectorates should have the power to obtain information from various persons and bodies being reviewed, including the LSCB, for the purposes of a joint review. Inspectorates would be requested to observe and comply with the arrangements which agencies have in place to protect and safeguard information, including specific agreements for accessing information in line with data protection and information sharing requirements.

	Total	Percent
Agree	5	100%
Disagree	0	0%

### Government response

Because there is a consensus the Government intends to proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document.

### Question 8: Do you agree that all inspectorates should have a power to enter premises, if necessary, when conducting an inspection as part of the review?

Respondent s agreed that inspectorates should have the power to enter premises if necessary for the purposes of a joint review.

	Total	Percent
Agree	5	100%
Disagree	0	0%

## **Government response**

Because there is a consensus the Government intends to proceed with the proposal set out in the consultation document.

## **Next steps**

The Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2005 will be revoked and replaced with The Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015.

## **Annex A: List of organisations that responded to the consultation**

- Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board
- Durham County Council (Children and Adults Services) and Durham Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Joint Response)
- The Ministry of Defence
- Oldham Municipal Borough Council
- Prospect



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