

Responses to Ofsted's consultation on the publication of statistics on early years providers and places and inspection outcomes

A report on the responses to the consultation

This is a report on the outcomes of the consultation on proposals for the publication of statistics on early years providers and places and inspection outcomes.

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Introduction

1. Ofsted currently produces two early years official statistics:
 - 'Registered childcare providers and places in England'
 - 'Early years and childcare registered providers inspections and outcomes'.
2. The 'Registered childcare providers and places in England' release is published twice-yearly on GOV.uk: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/registered-childcare-providers-and-places-in-england-december-2008-onwards.
3. The 'Early years and childcare registered providers inspections and outcomes' release is published quarterly on GOV.uk: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-and-childcare-registered-providers-inspections-and-outcomes-july-to-august-2014.
4. The consultation sought views on proposed new arrangements for these two early years official statistics. These proposals included three key changes to the statistical publications, namely:
 - changing the frequency of the releases
 - combining the two releases
 - streamlining the releases to make them more focused and user-friendly.
5. The consultation did not relate to how early years inspections are carried out, or to the publication of individual inspection reports.
6. The consultation ran from 25 September 2014 to 28 November 2014.

The consultation method

7. The consultation was carried out through an online questionnaire placed on the Ofsted website. It was also available to complete in Word/ PDF or to print out so that responses could be filled in by hand. We used a range of communication methods to ensure that we reached a wide variety of people who have an interest in, and use of, early years statistics.
 - A link was provided on our early years official statistics websites and was promoted on Twitter.
 - An email was sent to key stakeholders and each local authority with the links and details of how to take part in the consultation.
8. We received the majority of responses via the online questionnaire and in Word/PDF format by email. Six responses were received by post. A total of 122 completed responses were received and are included in the summary below.

9. The responses came from many sources, including registered nurseries, pre-schools, schools, childminders, early years representative organisations, local authorities and government departments. A more detailed list of external stakeholders is listed in the annex at the end of this document.

Summary of findings

10. The responses received to the consultation supported most of the proposals, although some proposals were strongly opposed:
 - A large majority of the respondents (79%) agreed with changing the frequency of these releases to three a year.
 - Nearly half of the respondents (49%) agreed that joining the two publications together would improve how we report on early years. Thirty three per cent disagreed and 18% were not sure. However, a high proportion of respondents (66%) agreed with expanding the current provider level files that report on inspections by adding registration data to it.
 - In terms of streamlining the 'Registered childcare providers and places in England' release, just over a third (37%) agreed that the proposed changes to the reporting on register combinations would improve the information. Forty five per cent agreed with removing the monthly breakdown reporting to focus on the registers at the end of each reporting period.
 - However, 82% of respondents said that they wanted us to continue to report on childminder data in chart form. At least half of respondents wanted all of the tables in the inspection outcomes release to remain as part of the official statistics suite of reports.
11. Based on these findings, changes to the frequency and some methodical and formatting improvements will take effect for the statistics published in June 2015. These statistics will report on inspections completed, and the number of providers and places on the register, as at 31 March 2015.

Findings in full

12. The full numbers and proportions of responses to each question can be seen in the annex.

Question 1: We are considering changing the frequency of the two early years official statistics releases to produce three releases per year. Would this number of releases be sufficient to meet your needs?

13. Of the responses received, 79% (95 responses) from across the different types of stakeholder agreed with this proposal and 13% (16) disagreed.

14. Comments included:

'This change is viewed as an improvement that would support current, termly reporting.'

'We agree with the change in frequency as it will give more accurate and relevant information to local authorities.'

15. In light of this feedback, we will be taking forward this proposal.

Question 2: We are considering joining the two early years official statistics publications together. Do you think this will improve the way we report on early years?

16. In terms of combining the two publications together, 49% (59 responses) agreed that it would improve the way we report on early years. However, 33% disagreed with the proposal.

17. Some responded that:

'It allows [for] greater comparisons.'

'It will all be in the same place, easier to find and more consistent.'

18. From the 'no' or 'don't know' responses, there was a concern that:

'this does not lead to any loss in detail with regard to either set of statistics.'

19. Taking forward this proposal will not lead to losing any detail; therefore the publications will be combined.

Question 3: Do you agree that removing the register combination data would simplify how we report on this information and make it more user-friendly?

20. Responses to removing the register combinations were more mixed – 37% (44 respondents) agreed that this change would simplify the information and make it more user-friendly, 46% (54) disagreed and 17% (20) were not sure.
21. Some of the concerns were that:
- ‘The data provided currently is very useful for researchers to look at the possible effects of those combinations. Researchers and policy makers need detailed data and don't need these publications to be simpler.’
- ‘[If removed], it would be less transparent.’
22. In light of this feedback, we will not be taking this proposal forward. We will not be removing the register combination data.

Question 4: Do you agree with removing the monthly breakdown reporting to focus on the register at the end of each reporting period?

23. Similarly, the respondent's views on removing the monthly breakdowns were mixed but more agreed than disagreed – 45% (54) agreed with their removal, 40% (48) disagreed and 16% (19) didn't know.
24. Contrasting comments included:
- ‘[Removing the monthly reporting would] make the information clearer and easier to read.’
- ‘... monthly breakdown enables us as an organisation to ascertain whether any specific sector changes have had an impact...’
25. We will take this proposal forward, users will continue to be able to analyse data within any time frame for which data are published by filtering on the provider level data.

Question 5: Do you agree with modifying charts 1–3 by removing the childminder information to report on childcare provision only?

26. Respondents strongly opposed our proposal to remove childminder details from the time series charts. Many expressed concerns that Ofsted was proposing to stop reporting on childminder numbers and places entirely. This was never the case. We will continue to report on childminder information alongside other childcare providers within the providers and places tables. However, 82% (100 of the respondents) felt that childminder details needed to remain in the charts as well, despite concerns around data continuity that the introduction of childminder agencies could produce.

27. In light of this feedback, we will not be taking this proposal forward. We will not be removing childminder information from charts 1-3.

Question 6: To streamline the early years and childcare registered providers inspections and outcomes release, are you happy for these tables and charts to be removed from the summary file? [The tables and charts were specified in the consultation and are listed in the annex on page 13].

28. The responses to the proposal for removing 10 tables and three charts from the inspection summary suite were varied. Some respondents wanted all tables to remain while others were happy for all of them to be removed. The majority of respondents specified a combination of tables that they use regularly and others that they were happy for us to stop reporting on. Over a third of respondents were happy to have tables 4a/b and 9a/b removed whereas over two thirds wanted charts 1-3 to remain.
29. In light of this feedback, we will not be taking this proposal forward. We will not be removing any of these tables or charts.

Question 7: We are considering changing the methodology for 'Actions issued at early years registered inspections' to report on the most recent inspections since September 2012. Are you happy with this change?

30. Fifty nine per cent (72) of respondents agreed to this change in methodology, 25% (30) disagreed and 16% (20) were not sure.
31. This proposal will be taken forward.

Question 8: We are considering merging our current provider level files that report on inspections and adding registration data to it. Are you happy with this change?

32. A majority of stakeholders (66%, 79 respondents) agreed with the merging our current provider level files and felt that this would:
- 'make it simpler and more accessible.'
 - 'provide a helpful opportunity to bring registration and inspection data together and report on them at the same time.'

33. We will be taking this proposal forward.

Question 9: Comments on how to further improve the official statistical releases (open text responses only)

34. We received 34 responses to the open question relating to other ways that official statistics could be improved. The overview of these comments is in the annex at the end of this report.

The way forward

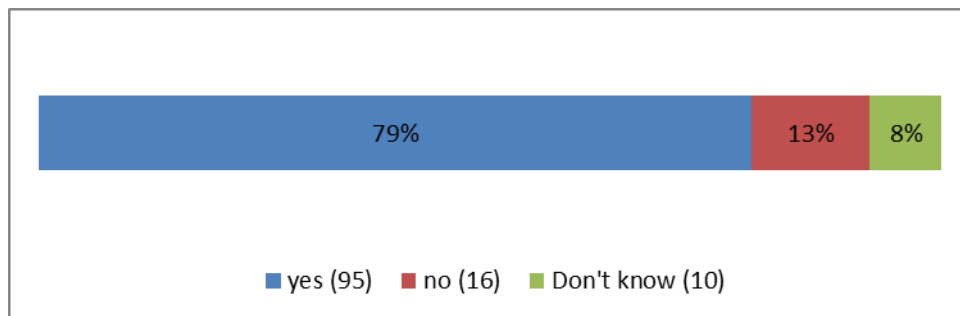
35. We are grateful to all those who responded to the consultation. Respondents' views broadly support many of our proposals; some of the comments emphasise areas of importance for our users. We will consider all of these as we take forward our proposals. Below are some of the changes we will implement in 2015.
36. The frequency of these publications will change to three releases a year and will report on periods set out below:
 - 1 January – 31 March
 - 1 April – 31 August
 - 1 September – 31 December.
37. A high number of respondents felt that combining the two releases would improve how we report on the early years sector and over two thirds agreed with merging the underlying provider level files. Therefore, the 'providers and places' and 'provider inspections and outcomes' releases will be combined for the June 2015 publication.
38. There was concern that a combined publication could result in a loss of information. This will not be the case. Although the process may see data being reformatted to make it more user-friendly, no data will be removed (this does not include specific information covered in other questions in this consultation).
39. A final standalone release using our current format will be published in March 2015 reporting on inspections that took place from 1 September 2014 to 31 December 2014.
40. The first new combined release will cover inspections that have taken place from 1 January 2015 to 31 March 2015 and will also report on the number of providers on the registers at 31 March 2015.
41. In line with the responses, the 'providers and places' register combinations will not be removed. However, we may change the way we present this data to make it more intuitive and easier for readers. In addition, we will add register information to the new provider level files. Providers and places numbers will be shown at the end of the reporting period and not at each individual month as is currently shown.
42. We will not change how we report on childminders. This reflects the strong responses we received on this. We will add a reference to childminder agencies in the relevant tables and charts to help clarify any impact agencies may have on Ofsted registered childminder numbers and places going forward.
43. In response to the mixed feedback to the proposal to streamline the contents, we will not reduce the number of inspection tables and charts, although we

may reformat and rearrange them during the merging process. We will amend the way we report on actions at inspection.

44. We will evaluate the helpful comments received on how to improve official statistics reporting and the consultation process generally and will consider many of the suggestions going forward.

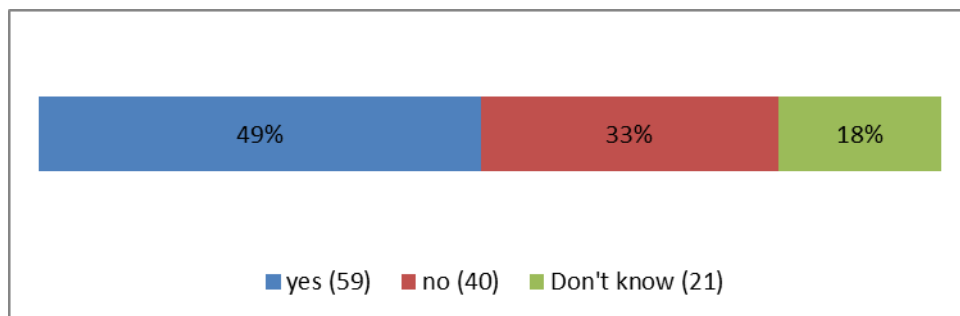
Annex

Question 1: We are considering changing the frequency of the two early years official statistics releases to produce three releases per year. (1 January – 31 March, 1 April – 31 August, 1 September – 31 December). Would this number of releases be sufficient to meet your needs?



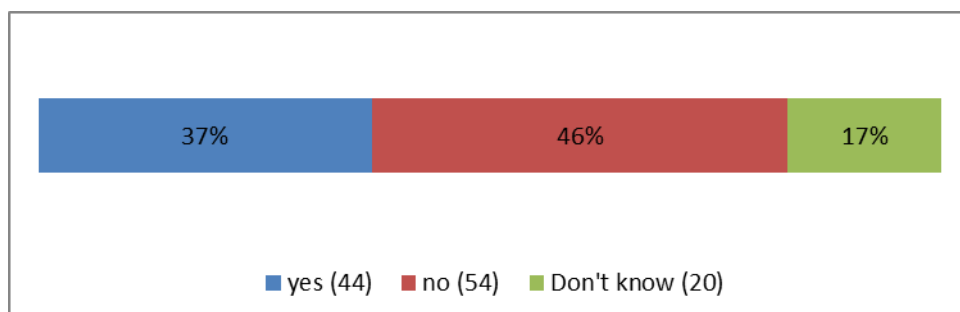
(Number of responses in brackets)

Question 2: We are considering joining the two early years official statistics publications together. Do you think this will improve the way we report on early years?



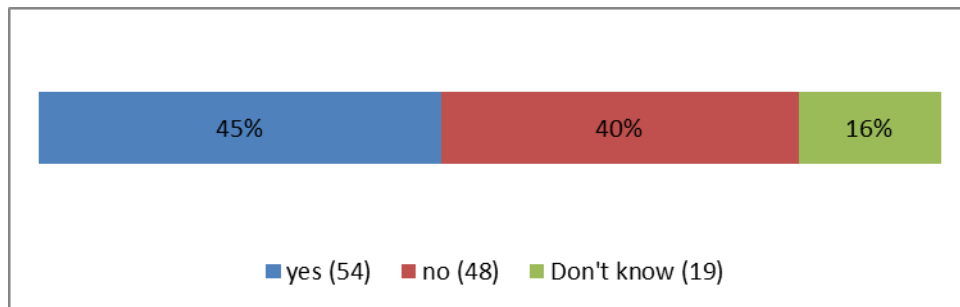
(Number of responses in brackets)

Question 3: Do you agree that removing the register combination data would simplify how we report on this information and make it more user-friendly?



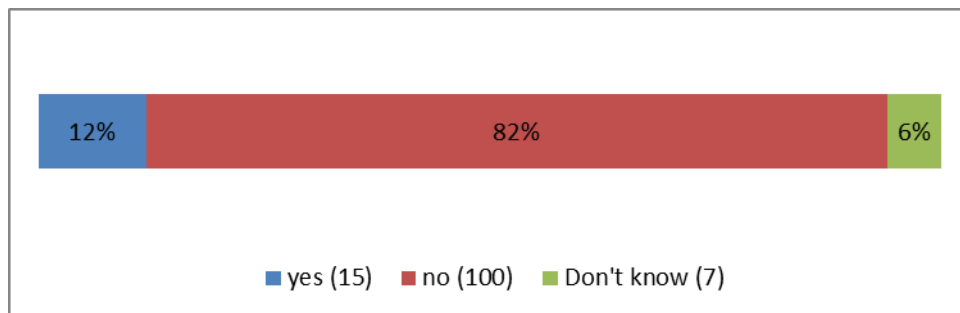
(Number of responses in brackets)

Question 4: Do you agree with removing the monthly breakdown reporting to focus on the register at the end of each reporting period?



(Number of responses in brackets)














Question 5: Do you agree with modifying charts 1–3 by removing the childminder information to report on childcare provision only?



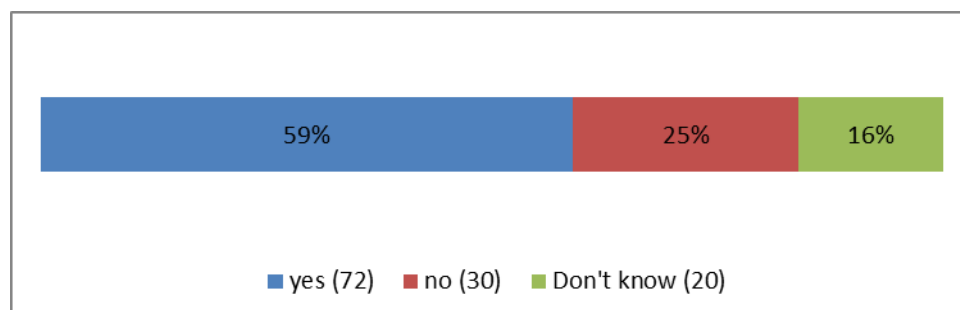
(Number of responses in brackets)

Question 6: To streamline the early years and childcare registered providers inspections and outcomes release, are you happy for these tables and charts to be removed from the summary file?

Table/chart number and title

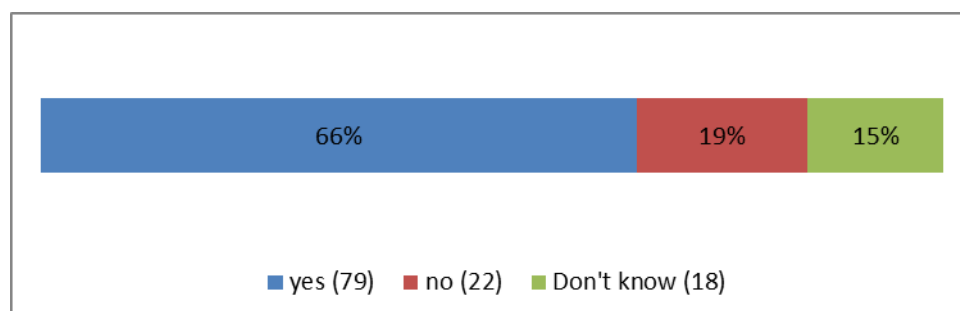
2	Inspection outcomes of early years registered providers inspected (in the quarter)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (24) ■ No (77) ■ Don't know (18)
3a	Overall effectiveness of active early years registered providers at their most recent inspection, by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (32) ■ No (73) ■ Don't know (14)
4a	Early years registered providers complying with the requirements of the Childcare Register at inspections (in the quarter) by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (40) ■ No (64) ■ Don't know (15)
4b	Providers on the Childcare Register only complying with the requirements of the Childcare Register at inspections (in the quarter) by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (40) ■ No (63) ■ Don't know (16)
5	Early years registered providers complying with the requirements of the Childcare Register at their most recent inspection by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (36) ■ No (71) ■ Don't know (12)
6	Providers on the Childcare Register only complying with the requirements of the Childcare Register at their most recent inspection by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (38) ■ No (65) ■ Don't know (16)
8	Recommendations made at early years registered inspections (in the quarter) by the statutory requirements of the Early Years Register		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (33) ■ No (69) ■ Don't know (16)
9a	Early years registered providers inspected when there were no children on roll complying with the requirements for registration (in the quarter) by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (44) ■ No (59) ■ Don't know (16)
9b	Active early years registered providers inspected when there were no children on roll complying with the requirements of registration at their most recent inspection		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (43) ■ No (58) ■ Don't know (16)
10a	Overall effectiveness of early years registered providers inspected (in the quarter) by region and local authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (24) ■ No (81) ■ Don't know (14)
Chart 1	Overall effectiveness of early years registered providers inspected (in the quarter)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (23) ■ No (79) ■ Don't know (16)
Chart 2	Inspection judgements of early years registered providers inspected (in the quarter)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (25) ■ No (80) ■ Don't know (14)
Chart 4	Inspection judgements of active early years registered providers inspected at their most recent inspection by provider type		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes (21) ■ No (83) ■ Don't know (14)

Question 7: We are considering changing the methodology for 'Actions issued at early years registered inspections' to report on the most recent inspections since September 2012. Are you happy with this change?



(Number of responses in brackets)

Question 8: We are considering merging our current provider level files that report on inspections and adding registration data to it. Are you happy with this change?



(Number of responses in brackets)

Question 9: Comments on how to further improve the official statistical releases (open text responses only)

A representative selection of the 34 responses we received is listed below.

- 'More clear tables that highlight the significant and essential criteria that would immediately inform staff/providers.'
- 'Use terminology understood by the majority of people reading the reports, including people from outside the sector, such as parents.'
- 'Make them easier to find on the Ofsted website.'
- 'Give outstanding settings including childminders more recognition.'
- 'Options to benchmark against statistical neighbours and regions would be extremely useful.'
- 'Given plans to create a new single inspection framework, we would suggest that thought be given as to how inspection outcomes data for providers on the EYR could be accurately compared to maintained early years settings in the future.'
- 'It would be helpful if in the zip files of data sent to us, the individual worksheets were given a title so that it is easy to see what is recorded in each one.'

List of external agencies who responded:

- Department for Education
- 18 local authorities/local government/councils
- 63 childminders or childminder coordinators
- 17 early years sector representatives
- 10 childcare providers
- 10 other
- three not stated.