

# Comprehensive area assessment: proposals for assessing local authority services for children and young people

Consultation document

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Ofsted's vision is to raise standards and improve lives. This consultation seeks views on proposals for assessing children's services and Ofsted's inspection of services for children in care and safeguarding as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

**Age group:** All

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## Introduction

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, which established the new Ofsted, sets out three overriding considerations which we are required to bear in mind in everything we do.

- We are to promote improvement in the services we inspect or regulate.
- We are to ensure that these services focus on the interests of the children, parents, adult learners and employers who use them.
- We are to see that these services are efficient and effective.

The Act also charges Ofsted with providing an annual performance rating for children's services. We have been keen to link this closely with the development of the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Over the past year, Ofsted has helped to develop this new framework for assessing local services and to contribute to it we will draw on evidence from across Ofsted's remit, including the performance and impact of adult learning and skills provision. Within this, Ofsted has a key role in commenting on services and outcomes for children and young people, and in particular, those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

This consultation seeks your views on proposals for:

- Ofsted's assessment of services for children and young people
- Ofsted's inspection of services for children in care and safeguarding.

Your views will help to refine and develop these proposals.

## About Ofsted

1. Ofsted was established in April 2007, bringing together the expertise and experience of four inspectorates in order to make a greater difference for children, young people and adult learners. It regulates and inspects a wide range of services including childminding and day care; children's homes; family centres; adoption and fostering services and agencies; the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass); children's services in local authorities; maintained schools; some independent schools; initial teacher education; further education colleges and 14–19 provision; a wide range of work-based learning and skills training; adult and community learning and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. Ofsted inspects and regulates to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages.

## Background

2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Ofsted to provide an annual performance rating for each council's children's services. This is currently undertaken through the annual performance assessment (APA) of councils' services for children and young people. APA and Joint Area Reviews (JAR) of local children's services come to an end in December 2008 and are replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which begins on 1 April 2009.
3. CAA will focus on people and places, with inspectorates jointly assessing how well local services work together to improve outcomes for local people, and the effectiveness of individual organisations in delivering those outcomes.<sup>1</sup>
4. Assessments will draw on new national indicators (the National Indicator Set), findings from inspection and regulation, and evidence of progress against targets in local and multi-area agreements. The first CAA reports will be published in November 2009.
5. The joint inspectorate proposals for consultation give details of the two main annual elements of the proposed new performance framework:<sup>2</sup>
  - **Area assessment (ungraded):** looking at how well local public services are delivering better results for local people and how likely they are to improve in the future.
  - **Organisational assessment (graded):** looking at the overall effectiveness of individual public bodies such as councils, in managing performance and using resources.
6. The consultation proposals make clear also that Ofsted will undertake a three-year rolling programme of inspection of services for looked after children and of safeguarding children and young people.
7. Other inspection will be triggered only where the annual assessments or contributory evidence identify weakness and where effective countermeasures are not in place. The Ofsted performance profile for each council's children's services, which we are consulting on, will provide a basis for Ofsted's engagement in triggered inspection.
8. The joint inspectorate CAA consultation proposals published in July are currently available for consultation until 20 October 2008 at (<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/caa/consultation.asp>). The proposals that follow should be read alongside this other consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> The Audit Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Healthcare Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspector of Prisons, HM Inspectorate of Probation and Ofsted.

<sup>2</sup> Comprehensive Area Assessment: joint inspectorate proposals for consultation – Summer 2007.

## What are we consulting on and what happens next?

9. The first part of this paper sets out Ofsted's proposals for discharging the duty to provide an annual performance rating for council's children's services by introducing a 'performance profile' for each local authority area. The second part sets out Ofsted's proposals for inspecting services for looked after children and for safeguarding.
10. Ofsted will develop these proposals in more detail over the coming months and set out the detailed methodology for the three-yearly programme of inspection of services for looked after children and safeguarding for which we have responsibility. Ofsted will carry out pilot inspections from January 2009 and undertake consultation with users through focus groups.
11. Ofsted's work is directed towards inspecting and regulating services in ways which will result in real benefit for the users of those services. Inspection should lead to improvement, but it should also give assurance about the standards the services achieve, their quality and the way resources are used. Ofsted's inspections of services have a strong focus on safeguarding children, young people and learners in vulnerable circumstances; they target where outcomes are not good enough, and where improvement is needed. It is in this context that Ofsted has constructed the approach it proposes to take to assessing local authority services for children and young people and, in particular, for inspecting services for looked after children and for safeguarding.
12. Ofsted welcomes responses to this consultation and the questions included in this document. Details on how to submit your responses to the questions and any other comments you wish to make are in Annex A. The consultation remains open until 3 December 2008. This timetable enables responses to be considered within the wider arrangements for consulting on and developing CAA.
13. Ofsted will publish a report on the responses from this consultation on the Ofsted website during January 2009.
14. If you would like a version of this document in a different language, or in different a format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Part 1: Ofsted's assessment of children's services

15. Ofsted will play a full part in CAA by contributing to the area and organisational assessments as set out in the joint inspectorate consultation document. To do this Ofsted will develop a performance profile, which will set out its assessment of strengths and weaknesses in outcomes and services for children and young people.
16. To meet the requirement for an annual performance rating for each council's children's services as set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the profile will be used to arrive at a rating, updated annually, for the performance of the council's children's services.

### Performance profile

17. Ofsted's wide range of inspection and regulation of services for children and young people provides a unique and comprehensive insight into the quality of services within an area. The local profile will bring together judgements on the quality of inspected settings, institutions and services with an assessment of performance against a wide range of Every Child Matters indicators for children and young people.

The performance profile will contain three sections:

- **Inspected services** – this section will summarise the results of Ofsted's inspection and regulation activity within the area by looking at key judgements from the inspection and regulation of services for children and young people, such as Early Years Foundation Stage settings, fostering and adoption services, maintained schools and children's homes and colleges. Where an inspection of looked after children and safeguarding has taken place, these judgements will be included in the profile.
- **Every Child Matters indicators** – the profile will also provide a summary assessment against each of the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, using indicators from the National Indicator Set and a small number of nationally available additional indicators as required to ensure depth and balance. Additional indicators will be drawn from existing national data, primarily collected by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Although the focus of this section is on outcomes for children and young people, service or process indicators from the National Indicator Set and elsewhere will also provide important data. These indicators not only provide a strong platform for robust judgements but will also highlight potential risks to the delivery of good outcomes in the future.
- **Direction of travel** – a summary of benchmarked performance and trends against targets.



18. Ofsted will update the profile four times a year on its website, in September, December, March and June. This will make sure that evidence is up-to-date and transparent. Ofsted intends to publish the first performance profiles in September 2009 so that they can be used for the first area assessments, which report in November 2009.

*Q1. Do you agree with our proposal for using a local performance profile as the basis for the Ofsted annual performance rating of children's services?*

## **Performance bands**

19. Ofsted proposes to analyse individual indicators in the profile by creating performance bands. These will be based on fixed cut-off points to highlight strong or poor performance, and will be used to inform overall summary judgements.<sup>3</sup> Ofsted is working with the DCSF to determine the cut-off points for the national indicators, which will also be used in the DCSF's Local Authority Interactive Tool. To ensure local circumstances are taken into account the profile will consider trends in local performance, make comparison with performance against local targets, averages for similar areas and the national context.
20. Banding indicators in the performance profile will identify where there are specific concerns about the well-being of children and young people. Such concerns may lead to consideration of triggered inspection through one or more of:
- targeted Ofsted inspections or with our partner inspectorates
  - specific surveys by Ofsted, such as those focusing on children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities
  - a particular focus in Ofsted's institutional or other service inspections.

*Q2. Do you agree that performance bands based on fixed cut-off points are a better approach to analysis than quartile distribution?*

## **Annual performance rating for children's services**

21. The annual overall rating will derive from the three sections of the performance profile – inspected services, ECM indicators and direction of travel. The overall rating will be subject to the application of thresholds – for example, where ECM indicators for either staying safe or enjoying and achieving are in the inadequate band then this must be reflected in the overall annual rating for children's services. The overall rating may take into account improvement over

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<sup>3</sup> Some indicators from the National Indicator Set and inspection and regulation data may not be suitable for banding and will be presented without it.

time, comparison with similar areas and performance against local area agreement targets.

22. Ofsted will report its annual performance rating for children's services by letter to each council in November each year. It will be reported also through the CAA organisational assessment, published in November each year.

*Q3. Do you have a view as to how the Ofsted performance profile should be used to provide an annual performance rating for council children's services?*

## **Organisational and area assessments**

23. The quarterly profile will also form the backbone of Ofsted's contribution to the new annual CAA organisational and area assessments. It will form part of the cross-inspectorate evidence file and be shared with the other inspectorates as part of the CAA process.
24. The organisational assessment and the area assessment are linked and Ofsted does not propose to contribute to the two assessments as if they were unrelated. A distinctive feature of the organisational assessment is its focus on the organisation's role in improving outcomes (for example, the council's role), as opposed to the combined contribution of the wider local strategic partnership in improving prospects in the area.
25. As set out in the joint CAA consultation document, inspectorates will take account also of self-evaluation, performance against Local Area Agreement targets, the views of service users and evidence from other government agencies and stakeholders in making area and organisational assessments.
26. Within the area assessment, Ofsted, together with the other inspectorates, will report on progress against local priorities, outcomes and prospects for improvement. Where performance against outcomes is poor or where services are inadequate and robust improvement actions are not in place, inspectorates will report this using a red flag as set out in the joint inspectorate proposals for consultation. Conversely, innovative or exceptional success from which others might learn will be highlighted using a green flag. Concerns raised in the area assessment will be taken into account in the organisational assessment.

## **Self-evaluation**

27. The joint consultation document makes it clear that robust self-evaluation should be an integral part of local performance management which inspectorates take into account in CAA.
28. Self-evaluation should give the local authority the opportunity to show how effectively Children's Trusts (or their equivalent) are tackling poor performance and improving well-being, raising standards of attainment, increasing efficiency and responding to users' needs through:

- a shared strategic vision for children's services through the Children and Young People's Plan
  - robust governance arrangements and inter-agency cooperation to improve children's well-being
  - the impact of commissioning on outcomes and the effectiveness of commissioning strategies
  - a clear policy framework for integrated processes and effective joint working, underpinned by effective needs analysis and responsiveness to users' needs
  - listening to and acting on the views of users.
29. Ofsted proposes that each local authority undertakes an annual area self-evaluation for children's services, which will include a commentary on the effectiveness of Children's Trusts, or equivalent, in promoting and improving the well-being of children and young people, including those in care and who are in particular need of safeguarding. Ofsted will not prescribe any particular model but will provide guidance to ensure self-evaluation is rigorous.
- Q4. Do you consider self-evaluation an important part of the process for assessing children's services?*

## Views of users

30. As set out in the joint inspectorate consultation document, inspectorates will draw on the direct views of users in CAA and also assess how well areas seek and use the views of users in improving services. Ofsted's institutional and service inspection and regulation takes account of service users' views, including those of children and young people also. These views are taken into account when making overall effectiveness judgements.
- Q5. How might we use the views of children and young people better in this process?*

## Other evidence

31. A wide range of additional views, shared with the local authority or relevant organisation, is available from agencies such as the Youth Justice Board and regional Government Office Children's Services Advisers or government field forces. Where demonstrably robust and based on verifiable evidence, Ofsted will consider them alongside the other available evidence when contributing to the area and organisational assessments.
- Q6. How valuable is other evidence in leading Ofsted to a judgement about children's services?*

## **Part 2: Inspection of looked after children and safeguarding**

32. This part of the consultation paper sets out Ofsted's proposals for the new three-yearly inspection of services for looked after children and for safeguarding children and young people from 1 April 2009. This is one element of the CAA.
33. In drawing up these proposals, Ofsted has taken into consideration the views of children on what inspection should do, met with stakeholders and focus groups, and taken account of the lessons learned from the programmes of JAR and APA.

### **How will the inspection of looked after children and safeguarding contribute to CAA?**

34. Findings of the three-yearly inspections of looked after children and safeguarding will provide significant evidence for CAA. Similarly, findings from the annual CAA will in turn guide the scope and extent of three-yearly proportionate inspection of looked after children and of safeguarding. In this context, proportionality means variation in the breadth and scope of inspection fieldwork according to the needs of the local area. It does not mean that those areas assessed as having good or better outcomes and services previously will not be inspected. But it does mean, for example, reduced fieldwork in those areas where the evidence shows that good outcomes are being achieved.

### **Why a programme of inspection for looked after children and safeguarding?**

35. Ofsted, with other inspectorates, assesses currently how services work together to improve outcomes for children and young people through APAs and JARs. Services for looked after children and safeguarding are always the subject of specific investigation in each JAR. These programmes will finish by the end of 2008 and be replaced by the new CAA, which will include a three-year programme of inspection of services for looked after children and for safeguarding children and young people. The inspection of both is necessary for Ofsted to fulfil its statutory obligations. However, we will inspect these services using a single approach and at the same time. This programme will start from 1 April 2009 under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. Ofsted is working with the other inspectorates to determine their involvement in this inspection programme.

## Looked after children

36. Ofsted believes that inspection should be targeted at those services where it will have most impact and where children and young people are most vulnerable. Ofsted commented on the standards and well-being of looked after children in its last Annual Report. The report concluded: 'While there is much good work in the social care and educational sectors in enabling children in public care to succeed, overall not enough is being done to raise their achievement and aspirations; the gap between the outcomes for them and for other learners is too great.'<sup>4</sup>
37. As part of the wider package of proposals outlined in the *Care Matters* White Paper and implementation plan, the needs of this particularly vulnerable group of children and young people were recognised and a three-year programme of inspection of services for looked after children, to be led by Ofsted, was agreed.<sup>5</sup>

## Safeguarding

38. The Government has defined the term 'safeguarding Children' as: 'the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enable children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.'<sup>6</sup>
39. The Third Joint Chief Inspectors' Report on arrangements to safeguard children found that while most children feel safe, and are safe, in their homes and communities, there are still serious concerns that some children are not well served and these children need particular attention to ensure that they are properly safeguarded.<sup>7</sup>
40. The case for inspections of safeguarding has been restated again recently. The 'Staying Safe' action plan issued by the DCSF in 2007 emphasises that keeping children safe is a top priority and sets out existing and proposed new work to keep children safe. It concludes:

'Inspection is a key way that we can assure whether services are providing support and protection to children in the local area.'

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<sup>4</sup> *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's services and Skills 2006/7.*

<sup>5</sup> *Care matters: time for change*, Department for Education and Skills, June 2007.

<sup>6</sup> *Working together to safeguard children*, HM Government 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Safeguarding Children: the third Joint Chief Inspectors' Report on Safeguarding Children 2008.*

*Q 7. Do you agree with the proposal to inspect services for looked after children and safeguarding together?*

## **The proposals in summary**

- The three-yearly programme of inspection of looked after children and of safeguarding will focus directly on the experiences of children and young people and will be undertaken as a single inspection event.
- While all local authorities must be inspected within a three-year cycle, inspections will be tailored and proportionate. Fieldwork will be targeted where outcomes or performance are weakest or where there is only limited evidence available.
- Ofsted will involve senior managers of services being inspected more directly in the inspection process. Self-evaluation will be central to the way the inspection is focused and conducted.
- The views of users will inform the focus of the inspection.
- The notice period will be set at four weeks in the first instance but Ofsted will look at ways of reducing this further to reduce any unnecessary preparation.
- A report written in clear, plain English will follow the three-yearly inspections. It will contain graded judgements and recommendations for improvement.
- To help make sure our approach is proportionate, a short unannounced safeguarding visit to children and young people's social care services will be carried out annually to look at thresholds, referral and assessment processes. Where this visit identifies concerns about safeguarding, the three-yearly inspection may be brought forward.
- The findings of this visit will contribute to the wider CAA area and organisational assessments.

*Q 8. Do you agree with the proposals as outlined in this summary?*

## **Three-yearly inspection**

41. Fieldwork will be undertaken as part of the three-yearly inspection of looked after children and safeguarding, although the focus of that work will be commensurate with risk. This necessary fieldwork will comprise case-tracking a sample of children and young people and meeting with some of those children and young people to listen to their views on living in and receiving care, on issues relating to safeguarding and the extent to which their views are taken into account by the independent reviewing officer in planning care and support. In turn, this provides challenge and assurance regarding the quality of service and impact on outcomes for looked after children and safeguarding.

42. In line with principles developed as part of CAA, Ofsted will undertake additional fieldwork only where:

- there are gaps in the evidence to make robust judgements.
- evidence is not available from another source – for example it is neither held by one of the other inspectorates nor available publicly.
- it is the most efficient means of obtaining additional evidence.

## Self-evaluation

43. Self-evaluation identifies where organisations or partnerships can improve their provision and helps to target resources to bring about improvement. It is used also by inspectors to target fieldwork. As noted earlier, Ofsted proposes that local authorities and their partners make available a single self-evaluation covering children and young people. Within this, Ofsted proposes that there is a clear focus on looked after children and safeguarding.

44. As a minimum, we propose that self-evaluation should include consideration of:

- the overall effectiveness of local services in improving outcomes for looked after children and for safeguarding, including those placed at home on care orders, out of the authority area, and/or who may be in custody
- the impact of commissioning on improving outcomes
- the impact of the Local Safeguarding Children Board on safeguarding all children and the way resources are used to target those children and young people made vulnerable by their circumstances
- advocacy services, support for families and friends as carers, children in care councils and reviews of children's cases
- the way that the views of users are used to help services improve.

*Q9. How can we ensure that annual self-evaluation of children's services includes sufficient detail on safeguarding and looked after children so that it can be used for the three-yearly inspections also?*

## Taking account of the views of children, young people, their parents and carers

45. The views of users of services and stakeholders should influence what, when and how we inspect in order to promote improvement. We currently send out an annual questionnaire to children and young people in some regulated settings such as children's homes, and their parents and carers, asking them about their experiences of the services they have received. We will continue to develop this and results will be analysed and used to assist in inspection planning and making judgements.

## Commissioning and monitoring of services

46. The effective commissioning and monitoring of services is central to achieving good outcomes for looked after children and families with complex needs. Ofsted proposes to use evidence of outcomes for children and young people who are receiving commissioned services to judge whether the local authority has commissioned services effectively and is providing value for money.

*Q. 10 Are there other ways of providing evidence about the impact of commissioned services?*

## Notice period

47. Ofsted knows from what children and young people tell us that we need to reduce the notice period for inspection visits so that inspectors have the opportunity to observe services as they really are. Ofsted knows from what local authorities tell us that preparing for an inspection for months beforehand distracts people and resources away from service provision. For these reasons, Ofsted is setting the notice period for these inspections at four weeks in the first instance. One of the constraints on minimising the notice period is the time taken to collect the views of children, young people and parents and carers prior to the inspection. Nevertheless Ofsted will continue to seek ways to further reduce the notice period.

*Q.11 Do you agree that the notice period could be shorter than four weeks?*

## Involving managers in inspection

48. Ofsted has involved senior managers in some elements of inspection processes. This allows a professional dialogue to develop quickly between inspectors and managers, yielding a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and how judgements are reached. We propose to test this approach during our pilot inspections early in 2009.

*Q12. Are there particular ways you believe Ofsted should involve managers in inspection?*

## Reporting

49. We will provide a single report that will set out our view of the quality of outcomes and provision for looked after children and for safeguarding. Within the single report, we will provide separate graded assessments for (a) looked after children and (b) safeguarding. All grading will be on a four point scale in line with all Ofsted's other inspection remits:

- Outstanding
- Good



- Satisfactory
- Inadequate.

*Q13. Do you agree with Ofsted providing a single report but with separate grades for looked after children and safeguarding?*

50. In judging the quality of services, we will ask a number of key questions. The most important of these are as follows.

- What is the overall effectiveness of the services in improving outcomes?
- What is the capacity of the services to improve?
- What do services need to do to improve? Recommendations will be targeted at services, partnerships and the local authority.
- Are leadership and management effective in improving services and outcomes?
- Is the well-being of the children and young people promoted sufficiently and are their views valued? Particular attention will be paid to whether children and young people are safe and feel safe.

*Q 14. Do you agree that these are the most important questions in judging the quality of these services?*

51. For looked after children, we also propose to report on:

- corporate parenting, including how children and young people influence strategy and service development to improve outcomes and the 'pledge' for looked after children
- support for family and carers
- support for children on the edge of care
- care placements, including whether children and young people are in the right placements, whether family and friends carers are supported and the effectiveness of commissioning and market management
- the effectiveness of care planning and reviews, including independent review processes
- educational attainment and support for education and training
- well-being, including health and safeguarding
- support for transition to adulthood.

*Q15. What else do you believe Ofsted should report on in relation to looked after children?*

52. In relation to safeguarding, we propose to report on whether children and young people are safe and whether children and young people feel safe by considering how well:

- children are safeguarded and protected
- child welfare concerns are identified and responded to appropriately
- safeguarding children is prioritised
- agencies and professionals work together to safeguard children

*Q16. Are these the right areas for Ofsted to report on in relation to safeguarding?*

53. To help reduce the differences in outcomes between groups of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and children and young people as a whole, Ofsted will apply thresholds to key judgements. For example, the overall effectiveness for looked after children will be judged good or better only if educational progress and safeguarding are also judged as good or better.

*Q17. Do you support the use of thresholds in making judgements about looked after children and safeguarding?*

## **Annual safeguarding visit**

54. Ofsted believes that safeguarding is of such importance that it cannot simply be left to be inspected every three years. Ofsted is proposing an annual safeguarding fieldwork visit to areas that are not due a three-yearly inspection in order to make sure that annual risk assessment for safeguarding is robust, both for the CAA process and for determining the scope of future fieldwork as part of the inspection programme. This fieldwork will focus on child protection and is not intended to gather evidence about universal safeguarding services or outcomes. The latter will be available from new national indicators and findings from Ofsted inspection and regulation of a wide range of institutions, settings and services.

55. The visit is unlikely to be longer than a day and will be unannounced – a ‘no notice’ visit. Typically, the visit may include speaking to the ‘duty’ manager, sampling files to consider the quality of assessments, application of thresholds, appropriateness of interventions and management oversight. In addition, through sampling a number of assessments carried out under the Common Assessment Framework, inspectors will examine how well the delivery of front line services is coordinated and integrated. In areas where there are more than five contact or referral points, inspectors will visit two or more of them.

56. The visit will be followed by a meeting with the Director of Children's Services to consider the outcome of the visit. Ofsted will review the impact of these visits after the first year with a view to introducing an even more proportionate approach, once a baseline has been established.

*Q18. Is the focus of the annual safeguarding fieldwork correct?*

57. The outcomes of the annual fieldwork visit will be made available to the Director of Children's Services and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and will contribute to the annual organisational and area assessment. Where concerns are identified, this may bring forward the three-yearly inspection of looked after children and safeguarding. It is not proposed that judgements made during this annual fieldwork are graded.

58. Good partnership working between all relevant agencies is key to developing the well-being of looked after children and in safeguarding children to make sure their needs are recognised and met. The Children Act 2004 recognised this principle by establishing a statutory duty on the specified agencies to cooperate to promote the well-being of children and young people. Evidence from JARs is that inspection fieldwork adds value by identifying issues in safeguarding practice that are not readily evident from desk-based exercises. Combining the desk-based annual assessment with this limited fieldwork, which will include dialogue with key partners, provides assurance that specified agencies are meeting statutory requirements.

*Q19. Do you agree that the Ofsted annual safeguarding fieldwork visit is an effective way of assessing risk and providing assurance that children and young people most in need of protection are safeguarded?*

*Q20. How can we best use limited annual fieldwork to provide assurance that children and young people are being adequately safeguarded and protected?*

*Q21. In addition to these proposals, what else should Ofsted consider in order to arrive at robust judgements about services and outcomes for looked after children and safeguarding?*

## Annex A

### Consultation questions

We welcome your responses to this consultation paper. The consultation remains open until 3 December 2008.

There are three ways you can submit your responses to the questions and any other comments.

#### Online questionnaire

Visit our website to complete and submit the online questionnaire:

<http://surveys.ofsted.gov.uk/caa2008>.

#### By hand

The questionnaire in this version of the consultation document can be filled in by hand.

Copies are available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Documents-by-type/Consultations/Comprehensive-area-assessment-proposals-for-assessing-local-authority-services-for-children-and-young-people](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Documents-by-type/Consultations/Comprehensive-area-assessment-proposals-for-assessing-local-authority-services-for-children-and-young-people).

When you have completed the questionnaire, please post it to:

Dimitris Solomonidis  
Ofsted  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE.

#### Onscreen

Visit our website to download the onscreen version of the consultation document: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Documents-by-type/Consultations/Comprehensive-area-assessment-proposals-for-assessing-local-authority-services-for-children-and-young-people](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Documents-by-type/Consultations/Comprehensive-area-assessment-proposals-for-assessing-local-authority-services-for-children-and-young-people). It has a questionnaire you can complete on your computer.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please email it to [caateam@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:caateam@ofsted.gov.uk). Please put 'Response to CAA consultation' in the subject line.

## Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, shape policy and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us. However, we may publish an organisation's views. If you are completing the consultation on behalf of your organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.

I would like Ofsted to consider publishing the views of my organisation. My organisation is:

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## Publication of responses

We will publish a summary of the key responses in January 2008.

Responses received will be evaluated alongside feedback from pilot inspections, which will be carried out in early 2009.

## Comprehensive area assessment consultation questionnaire

Before you begin please select which groups best apply to you by ticking their boxes. Choose one from each set.

I am:

- a child or young person
- a parent or carer
- an adult learner
- an employee

I work for:

- a service users' group (*please specify below*)
- an employees' group (*please specify below*)
- a local authority
- other (*please specify below*)
- prefer not to say.

My organisation is:

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## Part 1 questions

Q1. Do you agree with our proposal for using a local performance profile as the basis for the Ofsted annual performance rating of children's services?

Q2. Do you agree that performance bands based on fixed cut-off points are a better approach to analysis than quartile distribution?

Q3. Do you have a view as to how the Ofsted performance profile should be used to provide an annual performance rating for council children's services?

Q4. Do you consider self-evaluation an important part of the process for assessing children's services?

Q5. How might we use the views of children and young people better in this process?

Q6. How valuable is other evidence in leading Ofsted to a judgement about children's services?



## Part 2 questions

Q7. Do you agree with the proposal to inspect services for looked after children and safeguarding together?

Q8. Do you agree with the proposals as outlined in this summary?

Q9. How can we ensure that the annual CAA self-evaluation of children's services includes sufficient detail on safeguarding and looked after children so that it can be used for the three-yearly inspections also?

Q10. Are there other ways of providing evidence about the impact of commissioned services?

Q11. Do you agree that the notice period could be shorter than four weeks?

Q12. Are there particular ways you believe Ofsted should involve managers in inspection?

Q13. Do you agree with Ofsted providing a single report but with separate grades for looked after children and safeguarding?

Q14. Do you agree that these are the most important questions in judging the quality of these services?

Q15. What else do you believe Ofsted should report on in relation to looked after children?

Q16. Are these the right areas for Ofsted to report on in relation to safeguarding?

Q17. Do you support the use of thresholds in making judgments about looked after children and safeguarding?

Q18. Is the focus of the annual safeguarding fieldwork correct?

Q19. Do you agree that the Ofsted annual safeguarding fieldwork visit is an effective way of assessing risk and providing assurance that children and young people most in need of protection are safeguarded?

Q20. How can we best use limited annual fieldwork to provide assurance that children and young people are being adequately safeguarded and protected?

Q21. In addition to these proposals, what else should Ofsted consider in order to arrive at robust judgements about services and outcomes for looked after children and safeguarding?

## What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in our strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation process by ticking the box for that which most closely represents how you feel about each of the statements below.

I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

I had enough information about the consultation topic.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.

**Thank you for taking part in our consultation.**

## Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. **We would like to assure you that all responses are anonymous and you do not have to answer every question.**

Please tick the appropriate box.

### 1. Gender

Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Transgender <input type="checkbox"/>
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### 2. Age

Under 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	14–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19–24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25–34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35–44 <input type="checkbox"/>	45–54 <input type="checkbox"/>	55–64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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### 3. Ethnic origin

(a) How would you describe your national group?

British or Mixed British	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) How would you describe your ethnic group?

<b>Asian</b>		<b>Mixed ethnic origin</b>	
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>Black</b>		<b>White</b>	
African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any white background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Any other ethnic background</b>	
Any other Black background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Chinese</b>			
Any Chinese background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>
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#### 6. Religion/Belief

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other, please state:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 7. Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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