



Research and analysis

Statement on user engagement for statistics

Updated 18 April 2019

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [User commitment](#)
3. [User engagement statement](#)
4. [Access to statistics](#)
5. [Consultations and feedback](#)

1. Introduction

Ofsted aims to provide high quality and transparent statistics that promotes understanding and trust. This statement sets out how we will engage with users and how you can respond to the service we provide.

This document is also aimed to be a guide for those who produce Ofsted statistics. It refers to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics where relevant. It is one of 5 statements explaining [Ofsted's standards for official statistics](#). The other statements are:

- [Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008: statement of compliance](#)
- [Ofsted revisions policy for official statistics](#)
- [Ofsted policy statement on confidentiality and data access](#)
- [Statement of administrative sources](#)

Ofsted's Data and Insight group is led by the Chief Statistician. The group includes 4 analytical teams for Ofsted's work in:

- early years
- schools
- further education and skills
- social care

Our [official statistics](#) are grouped into the following collections:

- children's social care statistics
- early years and childcare statistics
- further education and skills inspections and outcomes
- independent schools inspections and outcomes
- initial teacher education inspections and outcomes
- maintained schools and academies inspections and outcomes

Data and Insight also publishes other information, including [Data View](#) (online interactive inspection data), regular management information datasets and 'Freedom of Information' datasets. We also provide ad-hoc data (including for parliamentary questions, Freedom of Information requests and briefings).

Our user engagement statement has been developed around the following principles:

- our statistical products will be timely, relevant and produced to the highest standards
- we will provide high quality analysis and insight into the sectors we inspect and regulate
- we will actively seek and be responsive to user feedback and insight
- we will seek a reputation for delivering an innovative and high quality service

We have also used the wider [Civil Service consultation principles](#) to help influence this statistical statement. These Civil Service principles were updated in 2016 to reflect the government's desire to engage more effectively with the public.

2. User commitment

Ofsted is committed to publishing timely, relevant, high quality statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. To do this, we will:

- publish our statistics on the time and date pre-announced
- publish methodology and quality reports for our statistics
- provide open and easy-to-use channels for users to give us their views respond quickly and accurately to questions and enquiries from our users
- consult with customers on developments and changes to our statistical methodologies, publications or publication processes
- be clear where we are able or unable to implement changes, and provide reasons why
- be transparent when we are unable to meet any of these commitments

3. User engagement statement

Ofsted aims to provide high quality and transparent statistics, promoting understanding and trust. This section explores how various aspects of our user engagement work will support this.

3.1 Knowing our users

Users of our statistics come from a diverse background and will have a variety of needs from the data we provide. While it's difficult to neatly categorise users, it is helpful to look at the broad user groups of Ofsted statistics:

Central and local government	Providers and the education/care sector	Wider users
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, directors and inspectors within Ofsted	Early years providers, such as individual childminders or chains of nurseries	The media who use and report Ofsted statistics The public, including parents and carers
Ministers from Department for Education (DfE) and other government departments	Schools and multi-academy trusts Further education and skills providers, such as colleges or those offering apprenticeships	Think tanks/special interest groups, such as those concerned with the impact of education policy changes or government reform Private organisations that use Ofsted data, such as online property websites or education consultants
Policy makers from Ofsted, DfE and other government departments	Social care providers, including chains of children's homes	Education sector advocacy groups, such as those who provide information and support to teachers, parents and carers
Analysts from Ofsted, DfE and other government departments		Voluntary sector, such as charities, who focus on social mobility within education
Parliament, including MPs and House of Lords		International users, including Eurostat
Local government, including local authorities		Academics, researchers and students
Regional schools commissioners		

This broad list also acts as a starting point for statistical teams within Ofsted to think about the range of people that will access our statistical products, or may do so in the future. We recognise this list may change and grow over time, and that we will need to tailor our approach to different users and their needs.

We will be alert to new users (and uses) of our statistics – especially those that harness the power of new technology: for example, users who web-scrape Ofsted inspection reports or companies that embed Ofsted data within their own website (such as estate agents or home selling websites). We will use notification

services, such as Google Alerts, to help us do this.

3.2 Understanding our users' needs

As well as knowing who our users are, we need to understand and think about their needs. Understanding how our statistics are used is essential to maximising the public value of our statistics and ensuring that users are able to make sound and informed judgements from our statistics.

Each statistical output team in Ofsted will think about the best way to document their users and their needs. This will include using the concept of 'user personas' to ensure that we design and develop statistical products with users in mind. View [more information about user persona groups created by the Office for National Statistics and used by the Government Statistical Service](#).

We will also look to increase our use of analytical tools, such as Google Analytics and Twitter Analytics, to observe and understand user behaviour. This will include using user metrics to inform our understanding of our users and their needs. We will use this information to understand the routes people take to reach our statistics and what their experience is when looking through our webpages.

3.3 Making our statistics accessible

Our statistical first releases include a commentary that is impartial, insightful and informative. Statistical publications are accompanied by a methodology and quality report to help the user understand the data sources, data quality and definitions. In line with the Principle 8 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (Frankness and accessibility), we will look to make our statistics accessible to a range of different audiences and release them in formats that encourage analysis and re-use.

We will look to use a range of digital tools and social media channels to disseminate and improve access to our statistics. Currently our official statistical releases are announced via the main [@Ofstednews](#) Twitter account.

It is important that the data used to produce our reports is freely available, transparent and accessible. This is in line with the government's [Open Data policy](#).

The 'Access to Statistics' section below provides more detail on how we release statistics.

3.4 Reviewing our outputs

Each team that produces the statistics will regularly review its outputs to keep them relevant to users' needs. Teams will strive to collect and understand user feedback to do this. We will treat all feedback received with respect and consider it in conjunction with data, resource and legal constraints.

3.5 Sharing success

We will share the outcomes of our user engagement activities across Ofsted, and the wider Government Statistical Service. We will celebrate success and share lessons learnt to encourage innovation and help embed a user-centric approach to developing our statistics.

We will also work with teams across Ofsted to further our knowledge of both internal and external users and their needs. We will work closely with Her Majesty's Inspectors, policy colleagues and Ofsted's Surveys and Evaluation team to make sure that we have a wide understanding of how our statistics are used.

4. Access to statistics

Access to our statistics is usually through the Ofsted statistical pages of the GOV.UK website. Each publication provides contact details for the responsible statistician and we encourage users to give feedback.

All our statistical publications are subject to our Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008 statement of compliance. In line with the Code of Practice, we will publish the month of release of these statistics 12 months in advance and the specific date at least 4 weeks in advance on the [GOV.UK statistics release calendar](#).

Our 'main findings' documents outline the main findings of our statistics and are available in more than one format, including HTML. We publish these documents in multiple formats so that the user has a choice. Publishing our main findings in HTML format allows us to gather metrics that inform our understanding of our users and their user journeys. Publishing in HTML also allows users to easily access our findings on mobile devices.

We publish supporting charts and tables, as well as the underlying data for all our publications. As part of our commitment to being transparent, Ofsted is determined to provide data to the public that is meaningful, accessible and freely available. This is in line with the [Government Statistical Service guidance](#) on releasing statistics.

We publish charts and tables primarily in Microsoft Excel, as users can use Excel's functionality to select the data they need. We also publish our record level

data in more accessible formats (such as CSV or .ODS format) that can be opened by a wider range of applications.

Media enquiries regarding the contents of a specific release should be directed to [Ofsted press officers](#).

All other users should use the email address provided in the statistical first release. If users need statistics not in existing Ofsted statistical publications, requests will normally be treated under the Freedom of Information Act.

5. Consultations and feedback

Ofsted formally consults on all major developments to our statistics which include significant changes to our statistical methodologies, publications or publication processes.

The Chief Statistician decides when it is appropriate to consult with our users. Consultations on existing statistical publications will be communicated via the pages for that statistical first release on the GOV.UK website. We will explore the use of social media to raise awareness of our consultations. And, as well as formal consultations, we will continue to look for complementary informal ways to engage with and understand our users' needs.

Ofsted will respond to every formal consultation providing a summary of all responses; the outcomes of the consultation and the rationale for the decisions made. Outcomes of consultations will be published on the [Consultations page](#) for Ofsted on the GOV.UK website.

5.1 Feedback

Feedback on any of our statistical methodologies, publications or publication processes is appreciated. We continuously gather informal user feedback. This includes feedback from inspectors and senior management within Ofsted, who relay comments and feedback from many other users.

If, for any reason, you feel that the service you receive from Ofsted's statistical team has fallen below the standards you expect then please contact us so we can investigate.

Helen Barugh, Chief Statistician
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Ofsted
August 2017

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