



Open consultation

Consultation proposals for the publication of statistics on further education and skills inspections and outcomes

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This consultation seeks your views on proposed changes to our statistical releases on further education and skills inspections and outcomes. We are seeking the widest possible range of views to ensure that the publication meets the needs of users with an interest or expertise in further education and skills. The closing date for this consultation is 8 January 2021.

About Ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people and in education and skills for learners of all ages.

Purpose and background to the consultation

This consultation seeks users’ views on the changes we propose for reporting on further education and skills inspections and outcomes. Your contribution will help to refine and develop the publication to meet users’ needs.

Two regular Ofsted statistical publications will be affected by these changes:

- ‘[Further education and skills inspections and outcomes](#)’. We publish these official statistics twice a year. It reports on the most recent inspection outcomes for further education and skills providers recorded on our systems as publicly funded and delivering education, training and/or apprenticeships and the outcomes of inspections in the academic year to date. In addition to tables, charts and underlying provider-level data, it includes a written commentary on the main findings from the data. We have incorporated the proposed changes into our latest publication so that users can see the impact of the changes.
- ‘[Management information – further education and skills](#)’. We publish this monthly. It also reports on the same inspection outcomes as above but is a smaller release and does not include a written commentary. We publish management information 11 times a year from November until September. We will not make changes to these releases until April 2021 and changes will depend on the outcome of this consultation.

The data affected by these proposals may also be quoted in a variety of our communications. These include speeches, blogs, conferences, surveys, letters, responses to press queries and future Annual Reports. Again, we will not make changes to these communications until April 2021 and changes will depend on the outcome of this consultation.

These proposals only affect how we report on further education and skills inspections and outcomes in our statistical datasets. They do not affect the frequency of inspections or the way that inspection reports are displayed on our reports website.

The aim of the consultation

The aim of this consultation is to investigate how we can make the content of these statistical publications more useful, informative and relevant.

Responses will inform the review of the publication. The consultation closes on 8 January 2021 and we will publish the results in February 2021.

Proposals

We are proposing 3 changes to the ‘further education and skills inspections and outcomes’ statistical data.

We propose to:

- make changes to provider types and provider groups so that similar types of providers delivering similar provision are grouped more effectively together
- carry out a one-time data cleanse for around 50 providers to remove their inspection histories from before they came back into funding and came back into scope for Ofsted inspection
- introduce more detailed reporting and deeper insights into the quality of education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and provision for learners with high needs across England

We believe that:

- changing the provider types and groups will enable us to give users better information on inspection outcomes for providers that are delivering similar types of provision
- removing old historical inspection judgements for providers that went out of scope for Ofsted inspection and came back in scope again will be more representative of their current provision
- including more detailed information on inspection outcomes for different provision types will allow users to see, for example, what the quality of apprenticeships looks like across the whole of England at a point in time

We have published the [official statistics as at 31 August 2020](#) with the proposed changes made, so that users can see the impact on the current year’s data and the trends over time. The [official statistics as at 29 February 2020](#) offer a good comparison, allowing users to compare the current methodology with the proposed changes. HMCI’s 2019/20 Annual Report and our management information publications continue to use the current methodology. We will not make the proposed changes on Ofsted’s systems until April 2021, depending on the outcome of this consultation.

Proposal 1: changing provider groups and types

The current further education and skills provider groups and types used by Ofsted are shown below.

Provider group	Provider type
Colleges	General further education college
Colleges	Sixth-form college
Colleges	Specialist further education college
Independent specialist colleges	Independent specialist college
Independent learning providers (including employer providers)	Independent learning provider
Independent learning providers (including employer providers)	Employer provider
Community learning and skills providers	Local authority provider
Community learning and skills providers	Not-for-profit organisation
Community learning and skills providers	Specialist designated institution
16–19 academies	16–19 academy converter
16–19 academies	16–19 free school
16–19 academies	16–19 academy sponsor led
Dance and drama colleges	Dance and drama college
Higher education institutions	Higher education institution

We propose to stop using the provider group ‘community learning and skills providers’, which contains 3 provider types: local authority provider, not-for-profit organisation and specialist designated institution.

We propose to remove ‘not-for-profit organisation’ as a provider type, reclassifying those providers as ‘independent learning providers’. Making this change will enable us to provide better insight into inspection outcomes for providers delivering similar provision. It will also align our provider groups with other parts of the further education and skills sector, that group private and charitable providers together.

The provider type ‘specialist designated institution’ will move into the ‘colleges’ group. The colleges group will then include all providers that are classed as ‘statutory providers of further education’ as defined in [section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992](#).

The provider type ‘local authority provider’ will become a provider group.

We are not proposing to make any changes to the higher education institutions, dance and drama colleges or independent specialist colleges provider groups. Prisons and young offender institutions will continue to be excluded, as their inspections are led by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons. National Careers Service contractors are no longer inspected by Ofsted since the introduction of the education inspection framework in September 2019.

The proposed further education and skills provider groups and types are shown below.

Provider group	Provider type
Colleges	General further education college
Colleges	Sixth-form college
Colleges	Specialist designated institution
Colleges	Specialist further education college
Independent learning providers (including employer providers)	Independent learning provider
Independent learning providers (including employer providers)	Employer provider
Local authority providers	Local authority provider
16–19 academies	16–19 academy converter
16–19 academies	16–19 free school
16–19 academies	16–19 academy sponsor led
Higher education institutions	Higher education institution
Independent specialist colleges	Independent specialist college
Dance and drama colleges	Dance and drama college

Proposal 2: removing historical inspection judgements for providers that had a prolonged break in funding

Historically, if a provider lost its directly funded contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, it would no longer be in scope for an Ofsted inspection and would not appear in our statistics. However, its unique reference number (URN) would remain open in Ofsted’s systems, maintaining its inspection history. If the provider regained funding and became in scope for inspection again, it would reappear in the statistics with its inspection history.

In January 2020, we changed our methodology, so that providers that were not directly funded and had not delivered education, training and/or apprenticeships for a period of 2 years would be marked as closed on our system. If the provider became publicly funded and started delivering after this period, it would be given a new URN, which was not attached to the previous inspection history.

Before this new methodology was introduced, around 50 providers came back into funding and started delivering again, after a period of not being in scope for an Ofsted inspection. These providers have either received, or are due to receive, a new provider monitoring visit, as described in [the further education and skills handbook](#). However, as their URNs had remained open, their previous inspection histories continued to appear in our statistics.

For these 50 providers, we are proposing a one-time data cleanse to remove the inspection histories from before they came back into scope for Ofsted inspection. We believe that this inspection history should not be used in our statistics as it cannot be regarded as representative of the providers’ current provision.

All but one of the providers affected by this proposal are in the independent learning providers (including employer providers) provider group. The other provider is a higher education institution. The data for all other provider groups remains unchanged.

The impact of these changes on our statistics is:

- a less than 1 percentage point increase in the overall proportion of further education and skills providers judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection as at 31 August 2020
- an increase of around 1 percentage point in the proportion of independent learning providers (including employer providers) judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection as at 31 August 2020

This change will not affect the Ofsted reports website, which always displays a full inspection history for each URN.

Proposal 3: introduce more detailed reporting on the quality of provision

We propose to introduce more detailed reporting and deeper insights into the quality of education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and provision for learners with high needs across England.

This will enable us, for the first time, to use a provider’s latest full inspection judgements to report on the quality of different types of provision in our official statistics publication. We will do this by combining the data from Ofsted inspection outcomes with funding and delivery data received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

We include providers in the analysis for a provision type if they have had a full inspection and are recorded in Ofsted’s systems on the day we do the data cut, as either:

- being directly and publicly funded to deliver that provision
- currently delivering that provision

We have included these measures as [experimental statistics](#) alongside this consultation. The [underlying provider-level data](#) is also available.

As an example, the chart below shows the quality of apprenticeship provision across England as at 31 August 2020. Providers judged good at their previous inspection will normally have a short inspection. A short inspection will determine primarily whether the quality of education/training that learners receive is good. However, a short inspection has no graded judgements and does not change the provider’s overall effectiveness grade. For providers whose latest inspection was a short inspection, we have included the judgements from their most recent full inspection. The table below the chart shows the breakdown of inspection types and outcomes.

Progress judgements made on new provider monitoring visits are not included and we will continue to report on these separately.

Quality of apprenticeship provision, as at 31 August 2020

Quality of apprenticeship provision, as at 31 August 2020

Latest inspection type	Grade taken from latest full inspection	Total number of providers	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Short inspection	Sub-judgement	123	4	116	3	0
Short inspection	Overall effectiveness	95	0	95	0	0
Full inspection	Sub-judgement	449	41	269	116	23
Full inspection	Overall effectiveness	73	32	30	9	2
Total	-	740	77	510	128	25

Number of providers.