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# Methodology and quality report: further education and skills inspections and outcomes

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## Introduction

This document contains methodology and quality information relevant to the further education and skills inspection and outcomes data.

You should read this document in conjunction with the background notes, available on the gov.uk website. It provides more detailed information. These notes will include helpful information that is not included here.

## Methodology

The statistical first release contains data that has been sourced from inspections of providers of further education and skills and apprenticeships in England, including providers:

- the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- in the case of adult education, a sequence or combined authority or the Greater London Authority
- through new apprenticeship levy

It reports on the following:

> In-year inspection outcomes for inspections carried out between 1 September and 31 August of the latest reporting year.
>
> ...
>
> These are regardless of whether the provider has since closed, stopped delivering or is dormant.
>
> ...
>
> Tables and charts count the number of inspections that took place. A provider could have been inspected more than once in the number of times that they were inspected within the year.
>
> ...
>
> We publish statistics each year, with a mid-year picture also published part way through the year.
>
> ...
>
> The most recent, or latest, full inspection outcomes for all providers inspected in the last 3 academic years (including adult education, apprenticeships and other funded activity) at a certain point in time.
>
> ...
>
> These are regardless of when the inspection took place.
>
> Tables and charts count the number of providers that have been inspected. Each provider can contain only one of each type of inspection. For example, a publicly funded and delivering adult education, training or apprenticeships but not 16 to 19 study programmes, or a 16 to 19 study programme but not adult education, training or apprenticeships.
>
> We are proposing to carry out a one-time data collection to review the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on our inspections. We will collect detailed information on the number and type of adult and skills learning in scope for an Ofsted inspection. These providers have therefore restarted their programmes of learning and have been in a position to be inspected, but have not been inspected because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, this previous inspection history continued to appear in our statistics because the last inspection was more than 3 years ago. We will use this data to ensure inspection activity and outcomes for these providers can be reported as representative of current provision. We have published the further education and skills inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2020 data, which will confirm the changes in our inspection activity. We will also publish a report that will confirm the changes in our inspection activity. We will publish our Ofsted inspection framework for further education and skills.
>
> We publish statistics about the most recent inspection outcomes for all providers inspected in the last 3 academic years (including adult education) as at 31 August each year, with a mid-year picture also published part way through the year.
>
> ...
>
> **Provider types covered**
>
> We extract the inspection outcome data from Ofsted's administrative systems. We report on the following types of provider: apprenticeships, 16 to 19 study programmes, adult education and skills providers, which are therefore included in the report. We have separated provider types and groups to make the underlying data easier to use. We have also included a table that shows the volume of inspections and charts so the statistics are easier to understand.
>
> To enable us to provide better insight into inspection outcomes for providers delivering similar provision, we have proposed making some changes to provider types and groups. The proposed changes are to:
>
> - remove 'not for profit providers' as a provider type and include these providers in the 'other providers' group
> - include specialist designated institutions in the college group
> - remove community learning providers as a provider type and include them in the adult education and skills group
> - change 'local authority providers' from a provider type to a provider group
>
> Historical centres and series will continue to be no longer inspected by us since the introduction of the education inspection framework (EIF).
>
> **All further education and skills providers**
>
> | Provider type | Provider group |
> |---|---|
> | General further education college | Colleges |
> | Sixth form college | Colleges |
> | Specialist designated institution | Colleges |
> | Independent specialist college | Independent providers (including employer providers) |
> | Independent training provider | Independent providers (including employer providers) |
> | Employer provider | Independent providers (including employer providers) |
> | Local authority provider | Local authority providers |
> | 16 to 19 academy sponsor | 16 to 19 academies |
> | 16 to 19 academy sponsor pilot | 16 to 19 academies |
> | 16 to 19 free school | 16 to 19 free schools |
> | Higher education institution | Higher education institutions |
> | Apprenticeship provider and assessor | Other providers |
> | Dance and drama college | Dance and drama colleges |
> | Prison service establishment | Prison service/young offender institutions |

## Short inspections

On 1 September 2019, we piloted the common inspection framework. Ofsted inspectors will carry out a full inspection of a provider if it is judged to be inspectable and if the inspection will provide sufficient evidence to enable us to make judgements about the quality of education, training and skills provided.

- there is insufficient evidence to confirm that the provider remains good
- there are concerns that the provider may be inadequate or may be moving to good, which may include concerns about safeguarding
- there is a change in the provider's circumstances that may be significant enough to warrant a full inspection

If a short inspection does not extend, the overall effectiveness of the provider remains unchanged from its previous inspection. We will carry out a full inspection if judgements are made. For example, this would apply in the case of:

- effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
- quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- education programme for young people

A decision is entered the short inspection does not determine the outcome of the full inspection. We will carry out a full inspection of a provider judged good at the 5-point grading scale. At the end of the full inspection, a provider could:

- remain good
- improve to outstanding
- decline to requires improvement or inadequate

When reporting on in-year inspections, we report on the following:

- the number of inspections, including full inspections and short inspections
- we have added an 'inspection type group' to the in-year data tabs to allow users to see the number of full inspections and short inspections
- a short inspection is counted as a full inspection in the reporting period, as we record this in the inspection type group as 'Short inspection' and we will report on the number of full inspections and short inspections
- if a short inspection does not extend, we will report on the number of full inspections in the inspection type group as 'Full inspection (short converted)' and we will report on the number of full inspections in the inspection type group
- we have added the ofsted ref tab to identify (using whether the data contains a full inspection or short inspection) the number of short inspections and full inspections combined

Short inspections have a minimal impact on the most recent inspection outcomes for providers. We report on the latest full inspection. We will report on the latest full inspection outcome as at the end of the reporting year. Short inspections that extended to full inspections. Short inspections that do not extend will not change the overall effectiveness. We will report the latest original overall effectiveness. We will report on the latest full inspection. We will include a table within the release to show the volume of short inspections, the number of short inspections that extended to full inspections and the resulting inspection outcomes.

## More information

Official statistics on further education and skills inspection outcomes have a time lag because most of the reporting period is after the publication of the data at the end of Calendar month. We try to ensure that we publish most of the inspection data for providers that we inspect in the reporting period as soon as possible. For instance, the inspection outcomes for further education and skills providers (apprenticeships and other funded activity) are published in the following month after the reporting period. We publish the data for other providers in the following month after the reporting period.

Under exceptional circumstances, we may withhold withdraw publication of an inspection outcome if we have reasonable doubt that the inspection report is not included in any of the dataset.

> If statements are made about whether inspections outcomes have improved or declined, we will make sure we compare like with like. We will make sure we compare inspections conducted in the previous inspection cycle, otherwise stated.

We also use data in this release to update Ofsted's Dashboard tool. The dashboard provides a snapshot of the quality of education, training and skills provision. Historical inspection outcomes that are not included in the data in this release can be found on the dashboard. Ofsted's systems will not be updated until a full inspection has taken place. Ofsted's systems will not be updated until a full inspection has taken place.

## Relevance

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. We exercise Ofsted's statutory to promote welfare and improvement across government through inspection for improvement, and to inform the public.

Data in this official statistics series is for inspections carried out under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## Communicating with users

The aggregation data for the official statistics allows us to communicate to users the quality of education, training and skills provision. We use the data to inform our work with providers, local authorities, and other stakeholders. We also use it to set out the important messages and communicate these in an understandable way. We also use the data to inform our work with users. We are able to observe and manipulate the data publication for our stakeholders.

Specific users and uses of the data include:

- media outlets using the data/findings from our statistical release to inform the public about the quality of further education and skills provision across the country
- allowing users to track movement in the further education and skills sector and to compare the quality of provision available in different areas and different learner groups
- helping identify areas of weak performance. This informs policy development and work with providers, local authorities, Department for Education, Education and Skills Funding Agency and other stakeholders. This also addresses issues and implement strategies to mitigate them
- the data is used by the Department for Education and the Department Apprenticeship and Skills Unit to inform policy development. The important messages within the official statistics contribute towards the findings in her annual report to the Secretary of State for Education

You can find more information about our inspection of further education and skills in England and Ofsted's inspection activity within the release.

We generate the data for the official statistics using our Ofsted Inspection Framework and is therefore administrative data.

## Meeting user needs

In 2014, we held a consultation on further education and skills official statistics. The proposed changes to the official statistics were in response to the feedback we received from our consultation. We published our response. The majority of responses supported this change and the proposal was accepted.

We held a further consultation between 31 July 2018 and 29 July 2018, asking users to comment on proposals to change the official statistics release:

- a change to the methodology for aggregating the 'all further education and skills providers' data, to make it more in line with the methodology for other further education inspections
- including providers that have ceased to be funded or closed as at 31 August in the latest reporting year in the inspection outcomes

As a result of the consultation, we implemented the changes.

We made a number of essential changes to the inspection framework and the inspection data we report on. We made these changes in 2019. We made changes to accommodate changes caused by the common inspection framework and changes to the data we report on. We made these changes to accommodate the changes resulting from the common inspection framework. We published our proposals for these changes in the consultation document. We published our response to the consultation. We made changes to accommodate the changes resulting from the common inspection framework. We published our response to the consultation document.

In 2018, the National Statistician published her guidance covering administrative data in official statistics.

We welcome feedback on our further education and skills inspection data, comments, questions or suggestions. Contact the Further Education and Skills data and Analysis team at FurtherEducationandSkills@ofsted.gov.uk.

## Coherence and comparability

The tables and charts within the release contain data from inspections over the past several years. There have been a number of framework changes since the first publication of the data. We have made changes to the inspection data. The overall effectiveness grade for the most recent inspection is the most comparable data. We have made changes to the inspection data. We have made changes to the inspection data. We have made changes to the inspection

migration process from the old to the new system to ensure that inspection data was transferred accurately. Since September 2015, we have extracted inspection outcome data from the new administrative system.

As part of the data migration, we identified and corrected one missing inspection and a small number of missing key judgements. The revised data is available in the official statistics published since September 2015.

Technical production of the publications may also result in manual errors. We use a rigorous data quality assurance procedure with the aim of minimising the risk of reporting error. If we discover an error within the document, we place a note on the website and upload a corrected version of the document as soon as possible.

See more information on the issues relating to the use of administrative data.

We publish revisions in line with our revisions policy for official statistics. For more information about the policy, visit the Ofsted website.

## Timeliness and punctuality

We currently publish data twice a year. This includes details of inspections that have taken place and been published in the relevant period. To ensure that data is as timely as possible, each release includes the most recent possible full month of inspections.

We publish data at 9:30am on the date pre-announced in the publication schedule. You can also find information on any delay in publication on the publication schedule.

We allow 1 calendar month after the end of the reporting period as the cut-off date for the inclusion of published inspection reports. This is to allow time for the publication of the majority of inspections that have taken place within the reporting period. The production stage for this release includes extracting and cleaning the data, drafting findings, quality assuring all outputs and uploading the information onto GOV.UK.

We announce publications via social media. We give pre-release access in accordance with the Pre-release to Official Statistics Order (2008).

You can find the list of postholders granted pre-release access as a separate document accompanying each release.

## Accessibility and clarity

We publish our releases in an accessible format on GOV.UK. The information is publicly available and there are no restrictions on access to the published data. Each release includes outcomes from Ofsted inspections that we have subsequently published. The data is for keeping users informed of the progress of the inspection framework and of changes in the further education and skills sector.

Underlying data in an accessible format accompanies each release to allow users to perform their own analysis. Users may use and re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

This underlying data consists of provider-level files in Excel and is available in the 'data, charts and tables' file.

## Performance, cost and burden on respondents

There is no respondent burden in relation to these statistics. This is because data is a by-product of Ofsted's inspection process. The only cost involved is the internal resource involved in collating the release.

## Confidentiality, transparency and security

All data releases follow Ofsted's confidentiality and revisions policies.

## Prisons and young offender institutions

Ofsted carries out inspections in prisons and young offender institutions in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). Ofsted inspectors evaluate the quality of education, skills and work in prisons and young offender institutions. HMIP publishes inspection reports.

We carried out inspections of prisons and young offender institutions under the common inspection framework until 31 January 2020.

The EIF was introduced for inspections of prisons and young offender institutions taking place from 1 February 2020.

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