

Part of **Education, universities and childcare during coronavirus**



Impact assessment

Return to routine inspection activity

Updated 4 May 2021

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Introduction

This statement sets out Ofsted's consideration of how our return to routine inspection activity fulfils the requirements placed on us by the [Equality Act 2010](#), including the public sector equality duty (PSED).

We resumed our routine inspection activity in April 2021. This included social care focused visits and monitoring visits.

From May 2021, we will resume education inspection framework (EIF) inspections. However, we will not resume a full programme of graded EIF inspections of state-funded and independent schools and further education and skills providers until September 2021.

The PSED requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

This statement accompanies the updates to our handbooks. The handbooks detail the changes we have made to reflect our understanding of the different ways that the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has affected providers. Registration and other regulatory activities have continued and will continue as required.

Phased return to routine inspection activity

On 25 March 2020, the Secretary of State for Education wrote to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, suspending routine inspection activity from March 2020.

We began our phased return to routine inspection in September 2020. Since then, we have:

- provided assurance about local authorities and social care providers, including children's homes
- resumed childcare registration inspections and visited early years providers
- made visits to schools, colleges and other further education and skills providers to look at how they are managing, to help them with collaborative conversations, and to report on the picture across England
- carried out additional inspections of independent schools and, from January 2021, monitoring visits of schools and further education and skills providers

One of our [strategic principles](#) is that Ofsted exists to be 'a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation'. We believe that a phased return to routine inspection activity will have a positive impact on all children, young people and learners, including those who share protected characteristics.

We will continue to focus our summer 2021 activity on all children, young people and learners. This includes those who share protected characteristics and those who live in households with people who share relevant protected characteristics.

Summer 2021 inspection activity

Inspectors will consider the needs of all who share the protected characteristics and whether providers are taking appropriate steps to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and diversity and foster good relations within their school, college or other provision.

How we prioritise activity during the summer term will vary across the different providers we inspect. For the most part, we will prioritise based on:

- the most recent inspection judgements
- information we hold about the provider, including any recent concerns or notifications
- the amount of time since the last inspection

You can find further details in the specific handbook for each type of provision.

How will Ofsted's return to routine inspection and summer activity impact on those with protected characteristics and the 3 PSED aims?

We have considered how the return to routine inspection and summer activity 2021 could have an impact on individuals or groups of people who share protected characteristics. Our intention is to ensure that the return to routine inspection plays its part in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion.

We have also considered whether the planned activity meets the 3 PSED aims, as follows.

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act

On-site visits and inspections during the summer term 2021 will allow us to consider and report on the safeguarding and welfare of children, and where appropriate the quality of their education provision, in the wide variety of providers that we inspect and/or regulate. We believe that this will discourage unlawful discrimination.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The activity we will carry out will be led by what is most important for children, young people and learners in each remit, including those who share protected characteristics and those who live in households with people who share protected characteristics. We will prioritise the things that matter most to the lives of children and young people. We will encourage equality of opportunity for all through the focus of our inspections.

Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We believe that the return to routine inspections and visits will contribute to this aim of the PSED. We believe that our activity will encourage providers to continue to take steps to foster good relations.

We have considered each of the relevant protected characteristics in developing arrangements for the summer term 2021:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We will continue to prioritise the safety and welfare of everyone involved in inspections and visits, including children, carers, staff and inspectors. We will follow the most up-to-date guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education.

If a provider has concerns about the timing of their inspection or visit and wishes to defer, we will judge each case in line with our [deferral policy](#).

Our handbooks make clear that inspectors will focus on whether leaders have the support they need and whether they are focusing on the needs of all children, young people and learners, including those who share protected characteristics. This will include considering how providers are identifying and addressing specific issues relating to children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, but also specific issues relating to the health, care and well-being of children and young people generally.

The aims and focus of our social care inspections and visits are consistent with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to have been significant for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers, many of whom may share protected characteristics or have family members who share protected characteristics. Inspections and visits to local authorities will offer assurance about decision-making in children's best interests in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monitoring and evaluation

As we return to routine inspection activity, we will ensure that we take account of the needs of all who share relevant protected characteristics and make reasonable adjustments where required.

Having fully and appropriately considered all aspects of our PSED, we believe that our planned summer activity will have a positive impact on individuals and groups who share relevant protected characteristics.

We will monitor the implementation of our summer 2021 inspection programme to ensure that we challenge and support all providers effectively. We will do this while taking full account of the needs of those who share relevant protected characteristics.

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