



Open consultation

# Equality, diversity and inclusion statement: Ofsted's role as quality assurance body for the Department for Education's Online Education Accreditation Scheme

Published 24 November 2021

## Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Proposals](#)

[How the proposals may affect people in terms of protected characteristics and how they meet the 3 PSED aims](#)

[Consultation, monitoring and evaluation](#)

 [Print this page](#)

## Introduction

This equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) statement sets out how Ofsted's role as the quality assurance body for the Online Education Accreditation Scheme will enable us to fulfil the requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#), including the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in [section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#).

The PSED requires Ofsted, when exercising its functions, 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

We are publishing this statement as part of our consultation on how Ofsted should fulfil its role as the quality assurance body for the scheme, and on our draft handbook for quality assurance visits to online providers. This statement sets out our assessment of the EDI implications of the proposed arrangements before consultation.

We will consider any consultation responses that raise matters related to EDI. This may result in changes to the proposals, or to this statement.

## Proposals

The consultation asks for comments on our draft handbook for quality assurance visits to online providers. It also seeks comments on specific aspects of our proposals for fulfilling Ofsted's role as the quality assurance body for the scheme, including that:

- we should base our assessment of proprietors' suitability on a wide range of information, including checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (where applicable) and with local authorities' social services departments
- we should carry out suitability checks on all proprietors who have management responsibility for a provider
- when looking at leadership, we should gather evidence about how a provider assesses whether it continues to be in the best interests of a pupil to receive their education online and how the provider supports its pupils to move to their next educational placement
- we should consider the impact that the provider's method of delivery has on the social and emotional well-being of pupils (under standard 8.4), the development of pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence (under standard 3.2) and the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills (under standard 1.4)
- we should require online providers to prove that they have a basic cybersecurity certification, such as Cyber Essentials, as part of our assessment of safeguarding (under standard 4.1)

References to standards in our consultation refer to the Department for Education's [Online Education Standards](#).

## How the proposals may affect people in terms of protected characteristics and how they meet the 3 PSED aims

We have considered how the proposals in our consultation and the arrangements for quality assurance activities set out in the draft handbook could have an impact

on individuals or groups of people in terms of the protected characteristics. We have also considered whether they meet the 3 PSED aims.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnerships

There is little data available about the characteristics of children and young people who are educated by providers of full-time online education. However, we believe that there is likely to be an overlap with children who have been excluded from school, children who are home educated and children with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Children excluded from school are more likely to be boys and more likely to be from particular ethnic groups, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, Black Caribbean pupils and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils. They are also more likely to have a disability. [\[footnote 1\]](#)

Children with EHC plans are more likely to be boys, more likely to be from particular ethnic groups, such as Irish Traveller, and more likely to have a disability. [\[footnote 2\]](#)

Our view is that the scheme is likely to have a particular impact on these groups of children.

## **Equality of opportunity**

The market for full-time online education is unregulated. The suitability checks and quality assurance visits we carry out will provide assurance that accredited providers are led by people of sufficient integrity, and that the children who are educated by them are receiving a good education.

Our view is that, over time, the presence of the scheme will improve practice in the online education sector generally. This will have a positive impact on children who are in full-time online education. This may help to advance equality of opportunity between boys and girls; between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, Black Caribbean pupils, Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils and pupils from other ethnic groups; and between pupils who have a disability and those who do not.

## Fostering good relations between groups and eliminating discrimination and other prohibited conduct

Several of the standards for online education provision relate to the teaching of the protected characteristics, the need to respect those with different faiths and beliefs, and the need to eliminate discrimination. Examples of these standards include:

- teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (standard 2.9)
- teaching does not discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics as if the relevant provisions of [Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010](#) applied to the service (standard 2.10)
- tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions are actively promoted by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures (standard 3.6)
- respect for other people is encouraged, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (standard 3.7)

Only those providers whose practice is in line with the aims set out in the PSED will be judged to meet these standards. Our view is that the scheme is therefore likely to foster good relations between groups and to reduce the likelihood of prohibited conduct in the online education sector.

## Consultation, monitoring and evaluation

We consider that we have given full and appropriate consideration to all elements of the PSED. The consultation process on the proposed new arrangements provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to raise any concerns they may have in relation to EDI. We may revise this statement in the light of any responses we receive. If we revise it, we will re-publish it with our report on the outcome of the consultation.

- 
1. [Statistics on the characteristics of pupils who are excluded](#) are published on GOV.UK. Although the category of disabled pupils is not included, there is likely to be a significant overlap between disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who are more likely to be excluded than pupils with no identified SEND. ↩
  2. [‘Special educational needs in England: academic year 2020/21’](#), Office for National Statistics, June 2021. ↩

Is this page useful?

Yes

No

Report a problem with this page

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

---

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support](#)

## Services and information

---

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

## Brexit

---

[Check what you need to do](#)

## Departments and policy

---

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Services](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[News and communications](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency and freedom of information releases](#)

---

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#) [Terms and conditions](#)

[Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#) [Government Digital Service](#)



