

**Changes to Ofsted's post-inspection processes and complaints handling:
proposed improvements – SFCA response, 29/04/2020**

**Proposal 1: provide greater consistency in post-inspection arrangements
across our work**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide greater
consistency in post-inspection arrangements across our work?**

Strongly agree

Comments:

SFCA welcomes these proposed changes to Ofsted's post-inspection arrangements. The Association has always been in favour of greater consistency in inspection practice across all stages of education. This is an important step towards ensuring that a transparent and credible complaints process is available to all types of provider.

**Proposal 2: allow all inspected providers 5 working days to review their draft
report and submit any comments about issues of factual accuracy and the
inspection process for us to consider before we finalise the report.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to allow all
inspected providers five working days to review their draft report and submit
any comments regarding issues of factual accuracy and the inspection
process for consideration by us before the report is finalised?**

Strongly agree

Comments:

We welcome the proposal for all providers to be provided with five working days to review their draft report and comment on the overall inspection process. Language such as 'too many' or 'a small minority' can sometimes be used subjectively and is not always underpinned by data. Allowing the opportunity for providers to query such elements where they might be misleading, undertake accuracy checks, and address wider concerns regarding the inspection process will ensure concerns are quickly and effectively resolved without the need to escalate matters through a formal complaint. Furthermore, allowing a five day review will ensure that the draft report can be fully reviewed by all staff involved in the inspection process.

**Proposal 3: consider and respond to formal complaints from inspected
providers before we publish their inspection report, if these complaints are
submitted promptly.**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to consider and
respond to formal complaints from inspected providers before their inspection
report is published, if these complaints are submitted promptly?**

Strongly agree

Comments:

The Association has always encouraged members to raise concerns they have about their inspection with the inspection team at the earliest opportunity to ensure their concerns are addressed quickly. In many cases, colleges have managed to resolve issues and concerns before their inspection has concluded, which in turn has led to fewer formal complaints being made.

At present, there is no requirement for an outstanding formal complaint to be resolved before a report is published. We welcome the proposal for a formal complaint to be reviewed before the final report is published - this is a sensible and fair approach.

Proposal 4: retain current arrangements for internal reviews into complaints handling, including the scrutiny panel.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to retain current arrangements for reviews into complaints handling, including the scrutiny panel?

Agree

Comments:

To ensure reviews are undertaken objectively, all reviews into complaint handling should be led by Ofsted staff who were not linked to, or involved in, the original inspection.

Additional comments

Do you have any additional comments on our proposed changes to Ofsted's post inspection processes and complaints handling?

Overall, this is a sensible set of proposals that we welcome. It is important to get the process in place before inspections resume after school and college closures end, whenever that might be. If inspections resume *immediately* after closures end, when learning is still likely to be heavily disrupted by the effects of coronavirus (including the autumn exam season and significant periods of missed learning for some students) there could be an increase in the number of complaints made to Ofsted around perceived unfair treatment during an inspection. As such, we suggest that Ofsted should not resume routine inspections until January 2021 at the earliest, (assuming that the autumn term begins as usual this September) to allow colleges to return to normal without the stress of preparing for an inspection and potentially having to engage with the new complaints process.