

News story: Ofsted seeking views on improved approach to short inspections

Ofsted today launched a [consultation on proposals to improve the short inspection](#) model.

Short inspections began in September 2015 as a proportionate approach to inspecting schools previously judged to be good. They last for one day and begin with the assumption that the school remains good.

Most schools inspected this way keep their good rating. But when the lead inspector decides there is insufficient evidence to confirm the school is still good, or thinks it may now be outstanding, they will convert the short inspection into a full inspection. A team of inspectors then arrives at the school within 48 hours, to gather more evidence and reach a final judgement. Currently, around one third of short inspections convert to full inspections.

While this inspection model has been widely welcomed, both school leaders and inspectors have told us that the 48 hour conversion period can be challenging, for the following reasons.

1. Inspection schedules often change at the last minute, which can mean standing down Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) at short notice.

OIs are typically busy school leaders who have booked time off to inspect, and these last minute changes are frustrating and impractical.

Many OIs say they would like to lead more short inspections, but they are put off by the uncertainty in whether a short inspection will convert.

2. The decision to convert a short inspection is usually taken mid-afternoon, and a team of inspectors then arrives on site early the next day.

School leaders tell us this experience can be overwhelming. It can be a particular burden on large schools, where up to 8 inspectors are needed for the full inspection.

3. In about 20% of cases, before a short inspection takes place it is already clear that a school is facing complex circumstances that warrant a full inspection.

In these cases, moving straight to a full inspection would be less disruptive for the school and a better use of Ofsted's resources.

Today's consultation proposes 2 operational changes to improve the conversion process.

1. When a short inspection converts, the full inspection will be completed within a maximum of 15 working days, rather than 48 hours.

This will allow Ofsted to give OIs 5 to 10 days' notice of an inspection, and provide more certainty about the number of days they need to be away from their own school. Where an inspection converts because of safeguarding concerns, the full inspection will still complete within 48 hours.

2. A full inspection will automatically take place in around 1 in 5 cases where Ofsted has prior evidence that a school is in complex circumstances.

Ofsted will select these schools through the standard risk assessment process.

To reduce the burden on very large schools, Ofsted will also continue the current practice of having a small team of inspectors carry out the converted full inspection over 2 days, rather than a large team on 1 day.

Ofsted's National Director of Education, Sean Harford said:

Short inspections are collaborative experiences, encouraging dialogue between inspectors and school leaders. And they've been widely welcomed by head teachers. But we've also heard concerns about the practicality of the 48 hour conversion window.

We're determined to keep the benefits of the short inspection model. But as we continue to develop an inspection programme that embraces the knowledge and skills of frontline practitioners, we need to make sure it works for those who give up their time to support us.

We are confident that these changes will ensure we use limited inspector time as efficiently as possible, while also reducing the burden on schools.

These are not fundamental changes; the inspection methodology will stay the same. And most good schools will still receive short inspections, and most will stay good.

The proposed changes would affect all good maintained schools and academies, as well as outstanding maintained nursery schools, special schools and pupil referral units, which are not exempt from inspection.

Ofsted is piloting the changes in around 35 schools during the summer term.

The consultation opens today and closes on 18 August 2017. If the proposals are accepted, it's expected that the changes will take effect immediately after the October half term this year.

First Minister sets out a way forward for devolution post-Brexit

Speaking at a Wales Governance Centre event in Cardiff, the First Minister will say that while leaving the EU has the potential to destabilise the United Kingdom, it also offers the opportunity for the country's reinvention.

The paper presents a blueprint for a major constitutional renewal of the UK, which can meet the challenges Brexit poses for the devolved nations and the future governance of the country as a whole.

The First Minister will say:

"Leaving the European Union is the biggest challenge facing the United Kingdom, a challenge thrown into even sharper relief by the outcome of the General Election.

"Decisions taken now will affect Wales for decades to come. Our ability to trade, travel, attract investment, determine policies, legislate, support our countryside, invest in our regions – all of these will be influenced by how we leave the EU.

"I have been completely consistent in arguing that securing full and unfettered access to the Single Market should be our top priority. But, the fall-out from Brexit also has the potential to destabilise the United Kingdom as we know it – or, if we work together, we can use this as an opportunity to reinvent and strengthen our Union."

The paper proposes replacing the current Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) with a new UK Council of Ministers that would take forward negotiations, reach binding decisions and help resolve disputes.

The council, served by an independent secretariat and a structured work programme, would bring the 4 governments together to negotiate and agree binding UK frameworks in devolved areas where they are needed, as well as considering non-devolved policies, such as state aid.

The paper also proposes a convention on the future of the United Kingdom. The

convention, chaired by a respected, independent figure, would consider major questions which will face the UK once it is outside the EU and take evidence from all political parties, civil society and all parts of the UK.

The First Minister added:

“The opportunities presented by EU exit must be about the future, not the past – and that is what our paper is about. It represents an important step forward in the work which we must undertake together with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland – through discussion, not diktat – to map our collective future.”

[Brexit: Securing Wales' future](#)

Press release: Poll: half of Brits believe background determines success

The scale of Britain's 'us and them' society is laid bare today (15 June 2017) in a new report which finds that nearly half of people (48%) believe that where you end up in society today is mainly determined by your background and who your parents are. This compares with 32% who believe everyone has a fair chance to get on regardless of their background.

The [social mobility barometer](#) uncovers feelings of deep social pessimism among young people with half (51%) of 18- to 24-year-olds agreeing with this statement, compared with 40% of those aged 65 and over.

The new poll, published by the Social Mobility Commission, will gauge public attitudes to social mobility annually over the next 5 years. It finds that half of young people think the situation is getting worse with only 30% of 18- to 24-year-olds believing it is becoming easier to move up in British society.

Meanwhile, only a fifth of 18- to 24-year-olds believe they have a better level of job security compared with their parents, and only 17% say they have better job satisfaction.

The poll of nearly 5,000 people, carried out by YouGov before the general election, finds that 4 in 5 people (79%) believe that there is a large gap between the social classes in Britain today. A large majority of people believe that poorer people are held back at nearly every stage of their lives – from childhood, through education and into their careers.

Over three-quarters of people (76%) say poorer people have less opportunity to go to a top university. Meanwhile 66% say poorer people have less

opportunity to get into a professional career.

It finds that nearly half of all Brits (49%) consider themselves working class and just over a third (36%) think of themselves as middle class with just one per cent identifying as upper class. Interestingly, 78% of those who grew up in a working class family classify themselves as this now.

A quarter (23%) of people who say that their family was working class when they were growing up, said that their social background has held them back in their working life.

One key finding is that the public believe a geographical divide exists in Britain today with nearly three-quarters of people (71%) say there are 'fairly or very' large differences in opportunity depending on where you live in the country.

Those living in Scotland (75%), Wales (75%) and the North East (76%) are most likely to think that differences in opportunities exist. Around 47% of those who moved from where they grew up say if they had stayed where they were, they would not had as many opportunities in life.

The Social Mobility Barometer also explores public attitudes to individuals own past social mobility experiences as well as their expectations for future generations.

The barometer finds that people believe that more needs to be done to help those at the bottom of society. Over 6 in 10 people feel that those who are 'just about managing' are not getting enough support from government (61%), while 49% say the least well off are not getting enough support.

Alan Milburn, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

Young people increasingly feel like they are on the wrong side of a profound unfairness in British society – and they are unhappy about it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, what could be dubbed the 'revenge of the young' was evident at the general election with record numbers of young people turning out to vote.

Down the generations, hope has been a defining characteristic of the young, but this poll suggests that today youthful pessimism is becoming the norm. There is a stark intergenerational divide about Britain's social mobility prospects.

The feelings of pessimism young people are expressing are borne out by the facts they are experiencing. Those born in the 1980s are the first post-war cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors. Home ownership, the aspiration of successive generations of ordinary people, is in sharp decline among the young.

Britain's deep social mobility problem, for this generation of young people in particular, is getting worse not better. The 20th

century promise that each generation would be better off than the preceding one is being broken.

The research also exposes a deep geographic lottery in Britain today where large majorities of people from the regions feel they have been left behind. The growing sense that we have become a divided 'us and them' society is deeply corrosive of our cohesion as a nation.

It is a wake-up call for the new government when 6 in 10 people say not enough is being done to help those treadmill families who are running hard just to stand still. Cracking Britain's social mobility problem has to become its defining domestic priority.

Jo Hobbs, chief executive of the British Youth Council, added:

As the national youth council of the UK, we hear from young people all the time that they are struggling and do not have hope for the future. The results of the Social Mobility Barometer chime with our own research that has shown that the majority of young people feel the world is changing for the worse and that they are uncertain and worried about the future. This is why we believe it is crucial that young people are given a voice and are empowered to take an active role in decisions that affect their lives.

1. The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social mobility in England. It currently consists of four commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.
 2. The commission board currently comprises:
 - Alan Milburn (chair)
 - Baroness Gillian Shephard (deputy chair)
 - Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath
 - David Johnston, chief executive of the Social Mobility Foundation
 3. The functions of the commission include:
 - monitoring progress on improving social mobility
 - providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
 - undertaking social mobility advocacy.
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News story: Zarga report published

MAIB's report on the investigation of the failure of a mooring line on board the LNG carrier Zarga while alongside the South Hook LNG terminal, Milford Haven, resulting in serious injury to a deck officer on 2 March 2015 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendations made.

PDF, 4.85MB, 116 pages

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Green Party leaders respond to Tim Farron resignation



14 June 2017

Responding to the news that Tim Farron has resigned as leader of the Liberal Democrats, the leaders of the Green Party said:

“We wish Tim the best of luck in his next challenge. Though we do not share all of the Liberal Democrat’s politics, we recognise the need for a powerful opposition to Theresa May and the DUP’s regressive alliance and will work with Tim’s successor where we find common ground to create a Britain that is open to all and a friend to Europe.”

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