



# Introducing Assurance Inspections to Secure Training Centres

Consultation

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## **About this consultation**

This consultation sets out the proposal to introduce an additional inspection, to be called assurance inspections, to secure training centres (STCs). This consultation is targeted with key stakeholders invited to contribute.

## **About Ofsted, HMI Prisons and the Care Quality Commission**

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (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.

HMI Prisons provides independent inspection of the conditions for and treatment of prisoners and other detainees.

The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator and inspectorate of health and adult social care in England.

The inspectorates work forms part of the United Kingdom's obligations under the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture (OPCAT). OPCAT requires State Parties to regularly and independently inspect places of detention.

## **Purpose and background to the consultation**

Since 2016, no STC has been judged higher than 'requires improvement to be good'. Our inspection reports reflect that STCs do not provide good enough care to children, and in some cases children have been at risk of harm or STCs have failed to keep them safe.

A second inspection each year will provide additional scrutiny of STCs. This assurance inspection will be a shorter inspection but will provide an opportunity to look at whether STCs are keeping children safe, that there is strong and effective leadership, and that actions are being taken to improve provision. This will mean that progress, or any deterioration in practice, will be more quickly identified and reported on. This follows a similar model to the one that Ofsted currently use in secure children's homes and children's homes.

An assurance inspection report will provide information to parents and stakeholders about children's care and safety at STCs. It will also provide information to the Secretary of State for Justice, the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Custody service in their oversight of STCs.

We will use the consultation responses to inform our new arrangements that we aim to introduce from April 2023.

## How to respond to this consultation

We welcome your responses to this consultation. The consultation opens on 9 January 2023 and **closes on 22 January 2023**.

Complete the questions about our proposals at the end of this document and return your completed response to [shaun.common@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.common@ofsted.gov.uk) by the closing date.

## Proposals

- We will continue to inspect each STC annually and make a judgement on the four-point scale: outstanding, good, requires improvement to be good and inadequate.
- Assurance inspections will be an additional inspection to the current annual full inspection so that progress, or deterioration in practice, is more quickly identified. The main purpose of an assurance inspection is to ensure children are well cared for and being kept safe, and to assess progress since the last full inspection.
- Assurance inspections will result in a single judgement: 'There are serious and widespread concerns', or, 'There are no serious and widespread concerns'.
- Assurance inspections will be unannounced and usually take place over 2 days.
- We will review the impact of assurance inspections particularly if STCs are judged to be consistently good or better over time.

Assurance inspections will evaluate:

### **The care of children**

- Children have trusted and secure relationships with staff.
- Children's social, physical, emotional, educational and mental health needs are well understood and effectively promoted.
- Children's views are understood and taken into account and their rights and entitlements are promoted and met.

### **The safety of children**

- Risks are identified, understood and managed effectively.
- Staff are well prepared and supported to manage challenging situations and unsafe behaviour effectively.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers**

- Leaders and managers use the findings from monitoring to improve the progress and experiences of children.
- Leaders and managers take robust action to address complaints or issues of concern.
- Leaders and managers ensure that there are sufficient suitably trained and experienced staff to meet children's individual needs.
- Leaders and managers have responded effectively to the recommendations made at the last inspection.

# Consultation questions

## Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, shape policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity with confidence, if you disclose this to us.

### 1 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?

Individual response	<input type="checkbox"/>
On behalf of an organisation, please specify Association of YOT Managers Ltd. (AYM)	

### 2 In what capacity are you completing this consultation? AYM Portfolio lead for custody

### 3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the introduction of assurance inspections?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: In light of the poor outcomes from previous inspections, and the failure to improve in some instances, in particular in Rainsbrook STC, we support any actions to identify early if things are deteriorating, or not improving as required. We also welcome feedback where establishments are improving as our membership will feel more assured about the care of the children they supervise when placed in the establishments.

### 4 To what extent do you agree or disagree that assurance inspections should be unannounced?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Comments: Whilst we are aware of the pressures such inspections place on establishments, we feel the poor progress made in actioning improvements in the past requires such an approach.</p>					

**5 Do you think the evaluation criteria sufficiently focus on the right things to evaluate?**

Evaluation criteria	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
The quality of care for children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The safety of children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The rate and pace of improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: However, we would caveat this in that we would wish to see evidence that training and principles of child first practice are carried through to practice.

It is possible to demonstrate staff have been adequately trained - the important issue is whether that training results in practice that truly supports children - and that leadership give appropriate time to allow for such quality practice.

We would also wish to see that the understanding and promotion of children's needs are then met through onsite and resettlement provision - that will truly demonstrate child first and partnership working with the community.

**6 Is there anything else we should take into account when planning how we undertake assurance inspections?**

**Comments:** Some consideration to how the establishments work and encourage engagement with the YOTs.

Make the suggestion that the assurance visits are used to assure or change initial inspection judgement, rather than introduce a new abridging standard.

Please return your completed response to [shaun.common@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.common@ofsted.gov.uk) by **22 January 2022**.