



coramVoice)))
getting young voices heard

**Improving the way Ofsted
inspects children's social care**

Participation pack


Ofsted

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About Ofsted's consultation

Ofsted is looking at changing the way it inspects children's social care in England.

This includes how Ofsted inspects local authority children's services, as well as services such as children's homes and fostering agencies. Ofsted wants its inspections to focus more closely on the things that matter most to children, young people and families.

As part of the consultation, Ofsted wants to hear from children and young people about some of the changes it is considering. This includes:

- how important relationships and connections are considered during inspections
- how inspectors can check that adults and services are working well together
- how inspectors can better hear directly from children and young people
- proposed changes to the way services are rated
- how inspection findings should be shared and reported

Ofsted has said it wants to improve the ways it hears from children, young people and families, and make sure its reporting better reflects the complexity of children's social care.

Your views matter

Children and young people are the ones experiencing these services, so their views are an important part of deciding how inspections should work in the future. Ofsted inspects the services that support children and young people, not the children and young people themselves.

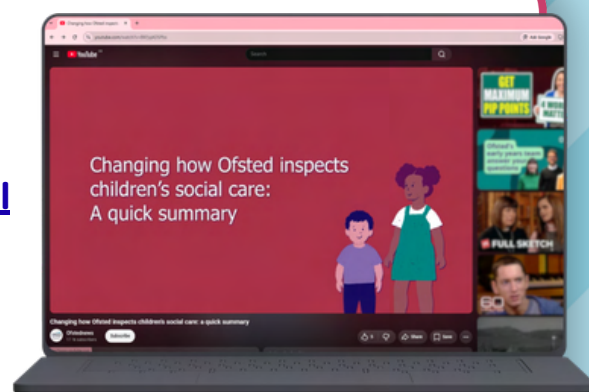
This pack has been created to help children and young people explore the consultation in a creative and interactive way, and share what they think about the changes Ofsted is proposing.

Watch the short video

Ofsted has created a short video explaining the consultation and the changes it is considering.

[Watch: Changing how Ofsted inspects children's social care - a quick summary](#)

You can also [read more about the full consultation on their website here](#).



Using this pack

Coram Voice's A National Voice (ANV), the National Children in Care Council, has worked with Ofsted to help make sure more care-experienced children and young people have the opportunity to have their say on the proposed changes to children's social care inspections.

ANV Ambassadors have taken the questions Ofsted would like to ask children and young people and helped turn them into interactive and engaging participation activities.

Inside this pack, you'll find a **menu of activities** covering the different topic areas Ofsted wants to hear from children and young people about.

You don't need to complete every activity. Choose the activities that work best for your group, the time you have available and the children and young people you're working with.

Who is this pack for?

This pack is for **participation workers and anyone who works with or supports children in care and care leavers.**

We've tried to make the activities flexible and adaptable for different ages, abilities and communication preferences. Please feel free to adapt how you deliver an activity to suit the children and young people you're working with, while keeping the main question and purpose of the activity the same.

Children and young people should be able to take part in the way that works best for them. This might mean writing, drawing, talking, moving around, recording their thoughts or working together as a group.

About the young people taking part

Alongside their views, we'd like to understand a little about who has taken part so that we can see whether we're hearing from a broad range of children and young people.

We do not need young people's names or any other information that identifies them.

A short monitoring form is provided separately alongside this pack. When returning your group's feedback, please complete and return this form to tell us about the children and young people who took part.

Capturing and sending us your feedback

The activities have deliberately been designed to capture children's and young people's views in lots of different ways. We'd love you to send the responses back in whatever format works best for your group.

For example, you can send:

- completed activity sheets, either photocopied or scanned
- photos/scans of flipcharts, post-its, drawings or other activity materials
- typed notes from discussions
- transcripts
- voice notes or audio recordings
- videos or video responses

Please send responses to ANV@coramvoice.org.uk

For files that are too large to email, you can send them to the same email address using **WeTransfer**.

Consent

Please keep written responses, notes and transcripts anonymous and don't include children's or young people's names or other identifying information.

If you send us photographs, video or audio in which a young person can be identified, please make sure you have the appropriate consent to share this with Coram Voice and confirm this when sending it to us. Where possible, we encourage you to capture and return responses anonymously.

Deadline

All responses and demographic information gathered through the pack will be brought together by Coram Voice and shared with Ofsted to inform the consultation.

Please send your completed feedback and demographic information to ANV@coramvoice.org.uk by **5pm on 23 September 2026**.

Deadline: 5pm on 23 September 2026

A few things to remember

These activities are designed to start conversations, not test children's and young people's knowledge. There are no right or wrong answers and we're interested in what they genuinely think, including where they disagree with each other or with the ideas being proposed.

Children and young people don't need to talk about their own experiences to take part. They can respond through examples, ideas or hypothetical situations instead.

Most importantly, try to keep the session relaxed, flexible and led by the children and young people taking part.

Before you start

Before beginning an activity, please make sure children and young people understand what the consultation is about, why Ofsted wants to hear from them, and how their views will be used. You may find it helpful to watch the short [Ofsted video](#) together first.

Please also make it clear that **Ofsted is not inspecting or judging the children and young people themselves**. Ofsted inspects the services and adults that support them. If an inspection finds that something needs to improve, this is not a reflection on the children and young people using that service, and they have not done anything wrong.

Remind children and young people that:

- there are no right or wrong answers and we want to hear what they genuinely think
- they can take part in whatever way feels most comfortable for them
- they do not have to share personal experiences or answer anything they don't want to
- they can disagree with the ideas being proposed, and with each other
- their responses will be brought together with those of other children and young people and shared with Ofsted to help inform the consultation

Most importantly, try to keep the session relaxed, flexible and led by the children and young people taking part. The activities are there to help start conversations, so please feel free to adapt how you use them to suit your group.

You might also want to start with a short icebreaker or fun group activity. Even where children and young people already know each other, this can help everyone settle into the session and set a relaxed tone before moving into the consultation activities. It doesn't need to take long. Just choose something that works well for your group.

Topic 1: Enduring relationships

Explores how children and young people can be supported to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them, including what adults can do to help those connections continue through changes in care.

Activity 1: Consistent connections

Aim

To explore who is important to children and young people, what those connections mean to them, and what adults can do to help children and young people maintain the relationships that matter to them.

Time

Around 30 to 40 minutes 

You will need

- Printed person cut-outs (**appendix A**)
- Around 10 to 20 cut-outs per young person
- Pens and colouring pens
- Post-it notes
- Printed prompt cards (**appendix B**)
- A way to capture discussion, such as written notes or a voice recorder

Short on time or resources?

You can run this activity using plain paper or flipchart paper instead. Ask young people to draw themselves in the middle and add their connections around them as you work through the activity.

What to do

Step 1

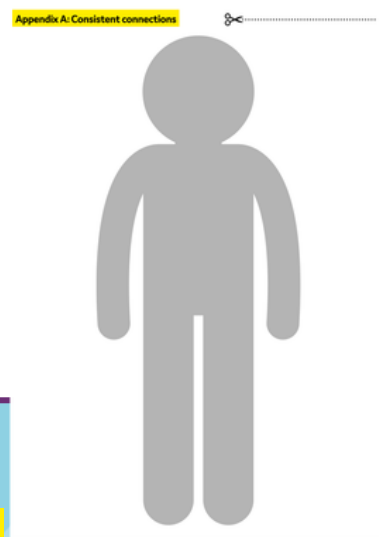
Start with you

Give each young person a set of person cut-outs.

Ask them to choose one person and draw or decorate it to represent themselves.

They can add as much or as little detail as they like.

Place this person in the middle.



Step 2

Build your connections

Ask young people to think about the people who are important to them.

For each person they think of, ask them to take another cut-out and draw, decorate or write on it to represent that person. Ask them to label the connection, for example, friend, sibling, foster carer, grandparent, teacher or someone else important to them.

They can arrange their people however feels right to them. For example, they might create a circle around themselves or make a line of connections with themselves in the middle.

There is no right number of people to include.

Step 3

What do these connections mean?

Give young people post-it notes and ask them to add some thoughts about the connections they have chosen.

You could start with:

- 
- 
- 
- What do you like about this connection?
 - What makes this person important to you?
 - What helps you stay connected to them?
 - Is there anything that can make staying connected difficult?

They can stick their post-its next to individual people or add them to their connections as a whole.

Young people don't have to write everything down. Talking about their answers is just as valuable, but make sure someone captures the key points from the discussion.

Introduce the prompt cards

Once everyone has had time to create and explore their connections, introduce the prompt cards.

Appendix B

1) Who helped you stay connected?

Looking at your circle of connections, who helped you to stay connected with the people who are important to you?

Step 4

Choose cards that feel appropriate for your group and use them to open up a wider conversation about staying connected, particularly during changes in a young person's life and what adults can do to help.

Young people can answer as many or as few prompts as they feel comfortable with. They don't need to answer based on their own experiences and can instead talk about what they think should happen for children and young people generally.

Make sure the discussion from the prompt cards is recorded in some way, for example through anonymous written notes, a transcript or an audio recording.

Capturing feedback



At the end, take a clear photograph of each completed connection circle or line, including any post-it notes.

Please also keep any notes or recordings from the prompt-card discussion, as these will help us understand the thinking and conversations behind what young people have created.

Step 5

Using paper instead

If you're using paper or flipchart rather than the cut-outs, follow the same steps. Ask young people to draw themselves in the middle, then draw or write their important connections next to or around them.

They can add post-it notes around their drawing and then use the same prompt cards to continue the discussion.

Activity 2: Rank, add, rerank

Aim

To explore what children and young people think adults should prioritise when helping them stay connected to the people who are important to them, while giving them the opportunity to add their own ideas.

Time

Around 20 to 30 minutes 

You will need

- Printed statement cards (**appendix C**)
- Blank cards for young people to add their own ideas (**appendix D**)
- Pens
- A table or clear space to arrange the cards
- Optional: paper or flipchart to record discussion

What to do

Step 1

Introduce the cards

Give each young person, pair or small group the set of statement cards.

Explain that each card shows something adults could do to help children and young people stay connected to the people who are important to them.

Ask them to read through all of the cards first. There are no right or wrong answers, and they may disagree with each other.



Step 2

Rank them

Ask young people to arrange the cards in order of importance, with the thing they think adults should prioritise most at the top.

Encourage discussion as they rank, particularly if young people have different views.

Capture it: Once they're happy with their first ranking, take a clear photo before moving on. This gives us a record of their initial priorities.

Step 3

What's missing?

Once they've completed their first ranking, give them some blank cards.

Ask:

"Is there anything important missing from these cards? What would you add?"

Young people can add one or more of their own ideas about what adults should do to help children and young people stay connected.

Step 4

Add and rerank

Add their new cards to the original set and ask them to look at all of the ideas again.

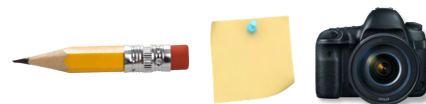
Would they keep them in the same order, or has anything changed now they've added their own suggestions?

They can move any of the original cards as well as the ones they've created.

Capture it again: Take another photo of the final ranking, making sure any new cards the group created can be clearly seen.

Step 5**Talk about what changed**

- Did anything move between your first and final ranking? Why?
- Where did the ideas you added end up?
- What's most important to you and why?
- Is there anything adults don't do enough of?
- If adults could get just one thing right, what should it be?

Step 6**Capturing feedback**

Please send us both photographs, showing the group's initial ranking and their final ranking after adding their own ideas.

Please also capture any key discussion, particularly why young people ranked something highly, why they added their own suggestions, and why anything changed between the two rankings.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Activity 3: Pick a person / word from the pot

Aim

To explore what important people and connections mean to children and young people, and what adults can do to help support and protect those connections.

Time

Around 15 to 25 minutes 

You will need

- A jar, bowl, box or other container
- Printed people cards and connection cards (**appendix E**)
- Blank cards (**appendix F**)
- Pens
- Optional: post-it notes
- A way to capture key points from the discussion

What to do

Step 1

Fill the pot

Before the activity, print and cut out the cards provided in the separate appendix and place them into your chosen container.

The pot contains two types of cards:

People, such as:

- Friend
- Brother or sister
- Mum

Connection words, such as:

- Trust
- Love
- Fun



Appendix E

Keep the **blank cards** to one side for now. You'll introduce these later in the activity.

Pick from the pot

Take turns choosing a card from the pot.

If someone picks a card that doesn't feel relevant to them or they don't want to talk about, that's absolutely fine. They can put it back and choose another.

Depending on the type of card, use the prompts to get the conversation started.

For a **person** card, you might ask:

- What might this person mean to a young person?
- What could make this an important connection?
- What could adults do to help a young person stay connected to them?

For a **connection** word, you might ask:

- What does this word mean to you?
- What might this look or feel like in a good connection?
- What could adults do to help make sure this is part of their important connections?

Continue for as many rounds as work for your group.

Step 2

What's missing?

Now bring out the **blank cards**.

Explain that the cards in the pot are only some examples and there might be important people, feelings or types of connection that you haven't included.

Ask: Is anyone or anything important missing from our pot?

They might add another type of person, a feeling, a word that describes a good connection, or something completely different.

Add their new cards to the pot and continue the activity, making sure some of the young people's own cards are picked and discussed too.

Step 3

Step 4

Bring it back to adults

Towards the end, ask the group to think about everything that has come out of the pot.

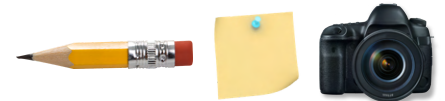
You could ask:

- What do adults need to understand about the people who are important to children and young people?
- What helps these connections last?
- What can get in the way?
- What should adults do to help children and young people stay connected to the people who matter to them?

They could finish by choosing one card from the pot that they think adults most need to understand. Ask them to explain why they chose it.

Step 5

Capturing feedback



There isn't necessarily a completed worksheet to send back for this activity, so capturing the conversation is especially important.

Please record the key things young people say through anonymous written notes, a voice recording or transcript. You could also photograph the cards young people added themselves or their final selection of the cards they felt were most important.

Adapt it for your group

You don't need to use every card. Choose the number and type of cards that work best for your group.

Young people could also draw a card rather than write one, use symbols or emojis, or complete the activity as a whole group.

For a quicker version, use only the people cards or only the connection words.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Topic 2: Inspections as a force for good

Explores how adults and different services work together to support children and young people, and what Ofsted should ask or check during inspections to understand what is working well and what could be better.

Activity 1: Who should Ofsted ask what?

Aim To explore what children and young people think Ofsted should ask the adults and professionals who support them, to help inspectors understand whether children and young people are getting the support they need.

Time Around 20 to 30 minutes 

You will need

- Printed people/role cards (**appendix G**)
- Blank person cards (**appendix H**)
- Pens and colouring pens
- Post-it notes
- Optional prompt cards (**appendix I**)
- Optional: large paper or flipchart
- A way to capture key points from the discussion



Appendix G

What to do

Step 1

Who are the adults around you?

Spread the people/role cards out where everyone can see them.

These could include:

**Social worker | Foster carer | Residential worker | Personal adviser |
Someone at school, college or uni | Health worker | Other**

Ask young people to choose the people they think are relevant to children's and young people's experiences of care and support.

They don't need to choose people from their own lives or tell the group who currently supports them.

If someone important is missing, they can use a blank card to add their own.

What would you want Ofsted to ask?

Introduce the main question:

Imagine you are an Ofsted inspector. What would you ask these adults to find out whether children and young people are getting the support they need?

Young people can write their questions inside or around each person, or use post-it notes and place their questions next to the relevant role.

For example, they might want Ofsted to ask about whether adults listen to children and young people, how often they see them, what happens when they ask for help, or whether different adults communicate with each other.

Try not to give too many examples before young people have had a chance to come up with their own questions. There are some optional prompts to use if the group needs a little inspiration.

Step 2

Dig a little deeper

Once young people have created some questions, invite them to look at what they've written and talk about why they would want Ofsted to ask them.

You could ask:

- What would the answer to this question tell an inspector?
- Why would this be important for a child or young person?
- What would you hope the adult's answer would be?
- Is this something you think inspectors might otherwise miss?

Young people can add any new questions that come out of the discussion.

Step 3

Choose your priorities

Ask each young person, pair or group to look back over all the questions they've created. Ask:

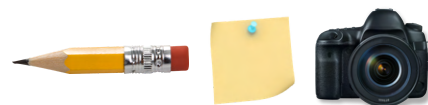
Step 4

If Ofsted couldn't ask everything, which questions would you most want inspectors to ask?

They could choose their top three, add a star beside their favourites, or move their chosen post-it notes to the top.

Encourage them to explain why these questions feel particularly important.

Capturing feedback



Take a clear photograph of the completed people/role cards and all of the questions young people have added.

Please also capture the discussion where possible, particularly:

- why young people want Ofsted to ask particular questions;
- which questions they prioritised;
- any roles young people added themselves;
- any different or opposing views within the group.

This could be through anonymous notes, a transcript or an audio recording.

Step 5

Adapt it for your group

Young people can complete this individually, in pairs or as a group.

They don't have to write formal questions. If it's easier, ask:

What would you want Ofsted to find out about this person?

The participation worker can then help turn their idea into a question, while checking that it still reflects what the young person meant.

For younger children, you could use the person figures visually and let them draw, use symbols or talk about what they think each adult should be doing.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Activity 2: What could be better?

Aim

To explore what children and young people think could work better in children's social care, what good support should look like instead, and what Ofsted could ask or check to find out whether this is happening.

Time

Around 20 to 30 minutes 

You will need

- Printed What could be better? templates (**appendix J**)
- Pens and colouring pens
- Post-it notes
- Optional: large paper or flipchart for a group version
- A way to capture key points from the discussion

What to do

Step 1

Something that could be better

Give each young person, pair or small group a **What could be better?** template.

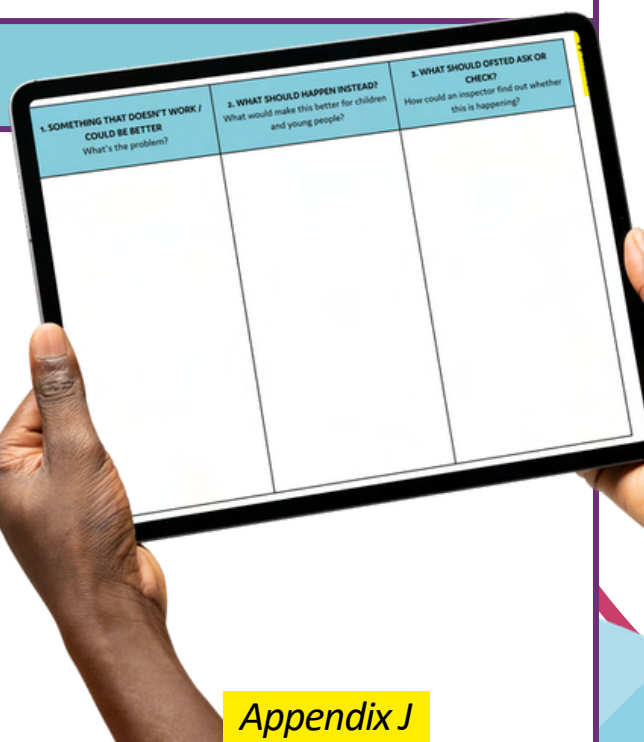
Start with the first section:

Something that doesn't work or could be better...

Ask young people to think of something that can make children's or young people's experiences of care or support more difficult.

This can come from their own experience, something they've seen or heard, or a completely fictional example. Nobody needs to share a personal experience to take part.

They can write, draw or use post-it notes to add their ideas.



1. SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T WORK / COULD BE BETTER What's the problem?	2. WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN INSTEAD? What would make this better for children and young people?	3. WHAT SHOULD OFSTED ASK OR CHECK? How could an inspector find out whether this is happening?

Appendix J

Step 2

What should happen instead?

Move on to the second part of the template:

What should happen instead?

Ask young people to think about what would make the situation better.

Encourage them to think about what they would want the adults or services involved to do differently, rather than simply describing what isn't working.

For example:

Something that doesn't work:	What should happen instead:
I have to repeat my story to lots of different professionals.	Adults share the right information and actually use what I've already told them.

Young people can create more than one **What could be better?** example if they have lots of ideas.

Step 3

What could Ofsted ask or check?

Once they've identified what should happen instead, introduce the final part. Ask:

What could an Ofsted inspector ask or check to find out whether this is happening?

Using the example above, this might be:

What information are you collecting from children and young people, and what are you doing with it?

Remind the group that they don't need to know how Ofsted inspections currently work. We want to know what they think inspectors should be looking for or asking about.

If they're finding it difficult to turn their idea into a question, the participation worker can help with the wording, while checking that it still reflects what the young person meant.

Share and discuss

If young people are comfortable, invite them to share some of their **What could be better?** examples with the group.

You could explore:

- Why would this change make things better?
- Who would need to do something differently?
- How would a child or young person know things had improved?
- What should Ofsted look for to know it's actually happening?

Young people can add to or change their templates as the discussion develops.

Step 4

Choose what matters most

If the group has generated lots of ideas, ask them to look across their completed templates and choose the changes they think are most important for Ofsted to pay attention to.

They could add a star to their priority ideas or, as a group, choose their top three.

Step 5

Capturing feedback



Please take clear photographs or scans of the completed **What could be better?** templates.

Where possible, also capture any discussion that gives more context to what young people have written, particularly why something needs to change and what they think Ofsted should ask or check.

This can be through anonymous written notes, a transcript or an audio recording.

Adapt it for your group

This activity can be completed individually, in pairs or as a group.

Step 6

Step 6 continued

For a more visual version, use three large sheets of flipchart paper headed:

WHAT'S NOT WORKING? - WHAT WOULD BE BETTER? - WHAT SHOULD OFSTED ASK OR CHECK?

Young people can add post-it notes, drawings or ideas to each section and move them around to show which ideas connect.

For children and young people who find it difficult to think of an example from scratch, you could use one of the fictional scenarios in **appendix K** for the group to explore together. **Appendix L** provides additional prompts to help guide the discussion before inviting young people to create their own examples.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.



Activity 3: What needs to change?

Aim

To explore what children and young people think adults should do when something isn't working well, and what Ofsted should ask or check to find out whether children and young people are getting the support they need.

Time

Around 20 to 30 minutes



You will need

- Printed scenario cards (**appendix K**)
- Printed discussion question cards (**appendix L**)
- Pens
- Post-it notes
- Optional: flipchart paper
- A way to capture key points from the discussion

What to do

Step 1

Pick a scenario

Choose one of the scenario cards and read it together.

Scenario 1: Who is sorting it?

Alex has a social worker, foster carer and someone supporting them at school. Alex has told all three that travelling to see their sibling is becoming difficult. Everyone knows there is a problem, but Alex still doesn't know who is helping to sort it out.

Appendix K

Explain that the people and situations are fictional. Young people are being asked to think about what they believe should happen, rather than share anything about their own lives.

You can explore one scenario in depth or choose more than one if you have time.

Step 2

What's going on?

Once you've read the scenario, start with:

What's going wrong or could be better here?

Give young people time to identify anything they notice.

There might be more than one issue and young people might interpret the situation differently. That's okay, capture the different views.

What should happen?

Next ask:

What should the adults do to make things better?

Young people can talk about what individual adults should do, how adults should work together, or what they think should change more generally.

They can write their ideas on post-it notes or the participation worker can capture the discussion.

Step 3

What should Ofsted find out?

Now introduce Ofsted. Ask:

If an Ofsted inspector wanted to find out whether this was being sorted, what should they ask or check?

Young people don't need to know how inspections currently work. Encourage them to think about what an inspector would need to find out to know whether adults are actually making things better.

Step 4

How would you know it had improved?

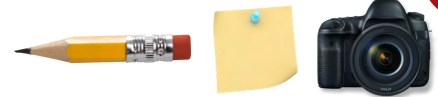
Finally ask:

If you came back to this situation later, what would tell you that things had got better for the young person?

This might be something an adult is doing differently, something that has changed in the young person's life, or simply how the young person might now feel.

Step 5

Capturing feedback



Please capture the key points from the discussion for each scenario, including:

- what young people thought was going wrong;
- what they thought adults should do differently;
- what they wanted Ofsted to ask or check;
- how they would know things had improved.

This can be through post-it notes, anonymous written notes, a transcript or an audio recording. You can also photograph any completed sheets or flipcharts.

Step 6

Adapt it for your group

You don't need to use every scenario. Choose the one that feels most appropriate for your group, or let young people choose which one they would like to explore.

Young people could work in small groups on different scenarios before coming back together and sharing their ideas.

For a more creative version, groups could act out, draw or rewrite the ending of their scenario to show what they think should happen instead.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Topic 3: Engaging children and young people during inspections

Explores how children and young people would like to be involved during inspections, including how they would prefer to communicate with inspectors and what would help them feel comfortable, listened to and able to share their views.

Activity 1: Have your say

Aim	To explore how children and young people would feel most comfortable sharing their views and experiences during an Ofsted inspection, and what inspectors could do to make it easier for them to have their say.
Time	Around 20 to 30 minutes 
You will need	• Printed Have your say cards (appendix M) • Printed I'd like this Maybe Not for me sorting sheet (appendix N) • Blank cards • Printed prompt cards (appendix O) • Pens • Optional: Post-it notes • A way to capture key points from the discussion

What to do

How could you have your say?

Spread out the **Have your say** cards.

Explain that the cards show different ways an Ofsted inspector could hear what a child or young person thinks.

Ask young people to look through them first before deciding what they think.

These include:

- Face-to-face
- Text or message
- Video
- Voice note or audio
- Online form
- Group conversation

Appendix M

Face-to-face
Text or message
Video
Voice note or audio
Online form
Group conversation

Step 1

Sort your choices

Ask young people to sort each card into:

- **I'D LIKE THIS**
- **MAYBE**
- **NOT FOR ME**

Appendix N

I'd like this	Maybe	Not for me

Step 2

There are no right or wrong answers, and different young people are likely to prefer different things.

They also don't have to choose just one way. For example, someone might like talking face-to-face while doing an activity, or they might prefer sending an anonymous message.

Capture it: Once the cards have been sorted, take a clear photograph of the completed activity before moving them.

What would you add?

Now introduce the blank cards.

Ask:

Is there another way you would prefer to have your say that isn't here?

Step 3

Young people can add as many ideas as they like and place their new cards under **I'd like this, Maybe or Not for me.**

Capture it again: Take another photograph showing the final sort, including any ideas young people added themselves.

Step 4**Tell us more**

Once they've finished sorting, introduce the prompt cards to explore what sits behind their choices.

You don't need to use every prompt. Choose the ones that work for your group and let the conversation develop naturally.

Make sure the key points from these conversations are captured, as the photographs alone won't tell us why young people made their choices.

Step 5**What should Ofsted remember?**

Finish by asking:

If you could give an Ofsted inspector one piece of advice about speaking to children and young people, what would it be?

Young people could write this on a post-it, say it aloud for someone to record, or agree on some advice together as a group.

Step 6**Capturing feedback**

Please send us photographs of the completed sorting activity, including any cards young people created themselves.

It's particularly helpful to capture:

- which ways young people would and wouldn't like to have their say;
- why they made those choices;
- any additional ways they suggested;
- what would help them feel comfortable and able to speak openly;
- their advice to inspectors.

Discussion can be captured through anonymous written notes, a transcript or an audio recording.

Adapt it for your group

This activity can be completed individually, in pairs or as a group.

For younger children or anyone who might find simpler wording or visual prompts helpful, you could use symbols alongside the three categories:



I'd like this



Maybe



Not for me

Young people could also rank their top three choices after sorting if they want to show which methods they would prefer most.

Importantly, young people don't need to imagine what they personally would choose. They can also talk about what they think would help other children and young people feel able to take part in an inspection.

**Step 6
continued**

Activity 2: Your message to Ofsted

Aim

To give children and young people a creative, non-written way to share their views about how Ofsted inspectors should engage with them during an inspection.

Time

Around 20 to 30 minutes 

You will need

- A phone, tablet or other device that can record video or audio
- Printed recording prompt sheet (**appendix P**)
- Optional: microphone, props or anything else young people would like to use
- Consent to share any identifiable video or audio responses

What to do

Step 1

Choose your format

Explain that young people can create their response in whatever way works for them. This could be:

- a short vlog
- a voice or audio recording
- a mock interview
- a mini podcast
- a role-play
- a reporter-style interview with another young person
- a character or short sketch

They can work individually, in pairs or as a group.

What would make you feel comfortable talking to an Ofsted inspector?

What should an inspector do when they first meet you?

Where or how would you prefer to talk to an inspector?



Step 2**Choose your prompts**

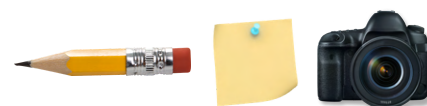
Give young people the recording prompt sheet and ask them to choose the questions they want to respond to.

They don't need to answer them all and can add anything else they think Ofsted should know.

Give them a little time to think about or plan what they want to say before recording.

Step 3**Record!**

Let young people take the lead on how they want their recording to look or sound. It doesn't need to be polished or professionally edited. We're interested in what they have to say, not the quality of the recording.

Step 4**Capturing feedback**

Please send us the finished video or audio recording. Larger files can be sent using the method explained in the Capturing and sending us your feedback section on **page 5**.

Please make sure you have consent before sending us any video or audio that could identify a young person. If you don't have consent to share the recording itself, you can instead send us an anonymous transcript or written summary of what was said.

Adapt it for your group

Young people don't need to appear on camera. They could record only their voice, interview someone else, film drawings or objects while speaking, use characters, or ask a participation worker to read out their words.

The format is completely up to them.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Topic 4: The five-point scale

Explores Ofsted's proposed five-point scale, including whether the ratings are easy to understand, what they mean to children and young people, and what each rating might look and feel like in practice.

Activity 1: Bring the ratings to life

Aim	To explore what Ofsted's proposed five ratings mean to children and young people, and what they think each rating should look and feel like in real life.	
Time	Around 30 to 45 minutes 	Exceptional
 You will need	• Printed house templates (appendix Q) • Printed rating cards (appendix R) • Pens and colouring pens • Post-it notes • Optional: craft or collage materials • A way to capture key points from the discussion	Strong standard
		Expected standard
		Needs attention
		Urgent improvement
		Appendix R
What to do		
Step 1	Choose your rating	
	Introduce Ofsted's proposed five-point scale:	
	Exceptional Strong standard Expected standard Needs attention Urgent improvement	
	Give each young person or group a house template and assign them one of the rating cards.	
	You can split the ratings between different groups or choose a smaller number to explore together.	

Build your home

Ask young people to imagine a children's home or other place receiving the rating on their card.

What would a place with this rating actually look and feel like for a child or young person?

Use the house template to bring it to life. They can draw, write, use post-it notes or add anything else they think belongs in or around the house.

Step 2

You could ask them to think about:

Appendix Q

- How would a young person feel here?
- What would the adults be doing?
- What would happen when a young person needed help?
- What would relationships with adults be like?
- What would everyday life be like?



They don't need to answer every question. They're there to help get ideas flowing.

Compare the homes

Place the completed houses alongside each other and look at what changes as you move through the ratings.

Ask:

Step 3

- What makes one rating different from another?
- Is it clear where one rating ends and the next begins?
- What would need to change for a place to move up or down a rating?
- Are any of the ratings difficult to tell apart?

Encourage young people to add or change things on their houses as the discussion develops.

Do the ratings work?

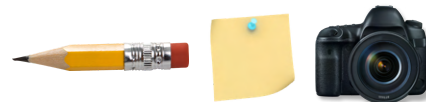
Finish by bringing the discussion back to the proposed scale itself.

Ask young people:

Step 4

- Do these five ratings make sense?
- Do the words match the homes you've created?
- Would you understand what they meant if you saw them in an Ofsted report?
- Is there anything you would rename or change?

Capturing feedback



Please take clear photographs of the completed houses, making sure we can see which rating each house represents.

Please also capture key discussion, particularly:

- what young people think each rating looks and feels like;
- differences they identified between ratings;
- ratings they found difficult to distinguish;
- anything they would change about the scale or its wording.

This can be through anonymous notes, a transcript or an audio recording.

Step 5

Adapt it for your group

You don't need to create all five houses.

For a shorter version, give the group two contrasting ratings, for example Exceptional and Urgent improvement, and ask them to create and compare the two homes.

Alternatively, different small groups could each create one rating. Bring everyone back together afterwards, place the five houses in order and discuss whether they feel like a clear progression.

Young people don't have to draw. They can fill their house with words, post-it notes, symbols, emojis or examples instead.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Activity 2: Makes sense | Not sure | Change it

Aim

To explore whether Ofsted's proposed five rating words are clear and understandable to children and young people, and whether they would use different words instead.

Time

Around 20 to 25 minutes 

You will need

- Printed five-point scale rating cards (**appendix R**)
- Printed Makes sense | Not sure | Change it cards (**appendix S**)
- Post-it notes
- Pens
- A way to capture key points from the discussion

What to do

Step 1

Put the ratings in order

Give young people the five rating cards:

**Exceptional | Strong standard | Expected standard
| Needs attention | Urgent improvement**

Don't tell them Ofsted's proposed order straight away.

Ask them:

If these ratings went from the best to the most serious, what order do you think they would go in?

Once they've agreed an order, reveal Ofsted's proposed order and compare.

Capture it: Take a photo of the order young people chose before revealing the proposed scale.

Exceptional

Strong standard

Expected standard

Needs attention

Urgent improvement

Appendix R

Step 2

What do the words mean?

Take each rating in turn and ask young people what they think it means.

They can write or draw their ideas on post-it notes and place them around each rating.

You could simply ask:

If you saw this rating on a children's home or service, what would you think it was telling you?

Don't worry about whether their interpretation matches Ofsted's intended definition. We want to understand what the words communicate to children and young people.

Step 3

Makes sense | Not sure | Change it

Now ask young people to sort each rating under:

MAKES SENSE

I understand what this means.

NOT SURE

I'm not sure what this is telling me.

CHANGE IT

I think Ofsted should use a different word.

Encourage them to explain what made them choose each category.

MAKES SENSE	NOT SURE	CHANGE IT
I understand what this means.	I'm not sure what this is telling me.	I think Ofsted should use a different word.

Appendix S

Step 4

What would you call it?

For any ratings placed under **Not sure or Change it**, ask:

What word or phrase would you use instead?

Young people can write their alternative on a post-it and place it next to the original rating.

They don't have to come up with a replacement for everything they dislike. Saying why a word doesn't work is useful feedback too.

Step 5

Does the scale work?

Finish by putting all five ratings back into Ofsted's proposed order and ask:

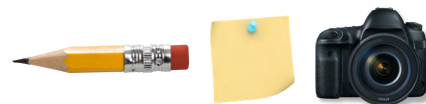
If you saw one of these ratings on a home or service, would you understand how well it was doing?

You could also ask:

- Is it clear which ratings are positive and which mean something needs to improve?
- Are any two ratings too similar?
- Is there enough difference between each step?
- Is there anything about the five-point scale you would change?

Step 6

Capturing feedback



Please take photographs of:

- young people's initial ordering of the five ratings;
- their Makes sense | Not sure | Change it sort;
- any alternative words or phrases they suggest.

Please also capture key discussion, particularly why young people found particular words clear, unclear or unsuitable.

Step 6 continued

Adapt it for your group

This activity can be completed individually, in pairs or as a group.

For younger children or anyone who might find visual ways of responding more accessible, encourage them to use drawings, emojis or examples to show what they think each rating means.

You could also simply ask them to mark each rating with a tick for Makes sense, a question mark for Not sure or a cross for Change it, rather than using the additional sorting cards.

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.

Topic 5: Reporting

Explores what children and young people would want to see in Ofsted reports after an inspection, including what information would be most useful and how reports could be made clear, accessible and engaging.

Activity 1: Design your Ofsted report

Aim

To explore what children and young people think about Ofsted's proposed report card, including what is easy or difficult to understand, what information matters most to them, and what they would change to make reports more useful and engaging.

Time

Around 30 to 45 minutes 

You will need

- Printed copy of Ofsted's proposed report card (**appendix T**)
- Printed Design your Ofsted report template (**appendix U**)
- Pens and colouring pens
- Post-it notes
- Optional: craft or collage materials
- A way to capture key points from the discussion

What to do

Step 1

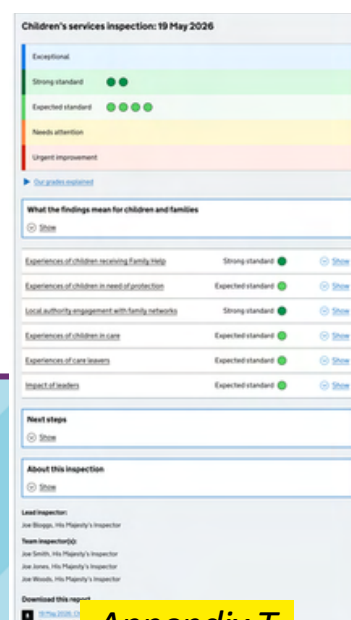
Introduce the report card

Explain that after Ofsted inspects a children's social care service, it publishes information about what inspectors found.

Ofsted is currently developing a new way of presenting some inspection findings through a **report card**. The example in this activity is a mock-up of what that could look like, and Ofsted would like to know what children and young people think about it.

Give each young person, pair or group a copy of the proposed report card.

Ask them to spend a little time looking at it before discussing it.



Children's services inspection: 19 May 2026

Exceptional
Strong standard
Expected standard
Needs attention
Urgent improvement

▶ Our grades explained

What the findings mean for children and families

Experiences of children receiving family help Strong standard

Experiences of children in need of protection Expected standard

Local authority engagement with family networks Strong standard

Experiences of children in care Expected standard

Experiences of care leavers Expected standard

Impact of leaders Expected standard

Next steps

About this inspection

Lead Inspector:
Joe Briggs, His Majesty's Inspector

Team Inspector(s):
Joe Smith, His Majesty's Inspector
Joe Jones, His Majesty's Inspector
Joe Woods, His Majesty's Inspector

Download this report

Appendix T

Step 1 continued

You could start with:

- What do you notice first?
- What do you think this report is telling you?
- Is anything immediately clear or easy to understand?
- Is there anything you are not sure about?

Try not to explain the report card too much before young people have had a chance to look at it themselves. We want to understand what makes sense without additional explanation.

Step 2

Take a closer look

Ask young people to look more closely at the different parts of the report card.

You could ask:

- Can you tell how well the service is doing?
- Do the ratings, colours and headings make sense?
- Can you find the information you want?
- Is anything confusing or missing?
- What would you change or want to know more about?

Young people can write or draw directly around the report card, use post-it notes, or simply talk through their responses.

Step 3

What matters most?

Ask young people to imagine that this report was about a service supporting them.

You could ask:

- What information matters most to you?
- What should you see first?
- Is there anything on the report card you probably wouldn't read?
- Is there anything you'd change or explain differently?

If helpful, ask young people to circle, highlight or mark the parts they think are most important.

Make it yours

Now give young people the **Design your Ofsted** report template.

Explain that they can use what they have just discussed to create the kind of report they would find most useful.

They can:

- keep or change parts of Ofsted's proposed report card
- add, remove or move sections
- change how information is shown
- use words, pictures, symbols or their own ideas

Ask:

If Ofsted wanted children and young people to actually look at and understand its reports, what should they include and what should they look like?

They can use the template provided or start from scratch on a separate piece of paper.

Appendix U: Design your Ofsted report

DESIGN YOUR OFSTED REPORT

Use this page to create the kind of Ofsted report you would want to see. Keep, change, add, remove or move anything you like. You can use words, pictures, symbols or your own ideas.

Think about:
What should stand out? What should come first? What would make it easy to understand?

Appendix U

Step 4

Would you actually use it?

Once they have finished, bring the conversation back together.

You could ask:

- Would you actually look at a report like this?
- Would you prefer a short overview or more detail?
- Would you prefer words, pictures, symbols or a mixture?
- Would you rather see it on paper, online or another way?
- If you could change one thing, what would it be?

Step 5

Capturing feedback



Please send us:

- annotated copies of Ofsted's proposed report card
- completed Design your Ofsted report templates or young people's own designs
- any post-it notes or other activity materials
- key points from the discussion

Where possible, capture why young people would make particular changes, as this helps us understand the thinking behind their ideas.

Adapt it for your group

Young people do not need to complete every part of the activity.

For a shorter version, simply show the proposed report card and ask:

- What works?
- What doesn't?
- What would you change?

For younger children or anyone who might find the full report card overwhelming, you could look at one section at a time and use post-it notes, symbols, drawing or conversation.

For older young people, you could give them a blank page and ask them to redesign the report card from scratch after looking at Ofsted's example.

Step 6

See page 5 for more guidance on capturing and sending feedback.