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7 November 2024

Mr Connor Naismith MP  
Member of Parliament for Crewe and Nantwich  
House of Commons  
London  
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**Sir Martyn Oliver**  
His Majesty's Chief Inspector

Sent by email to: [connor.naismith.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:connor.naismith.mp@parliament.uk)

Dear Mr Naismith

## **PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NUMBER 11752**

*To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of Ofsted's complaints procedure; and what her Department's policy is on its future.*

Your recent Parliamentary Question has been passed to me for response as His Majesty's Chief Inspector for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

I am committed to ensuring that all of our work is carried out with professionalism, courtesy, empathy and respect. However, should anyone have any concerns about our work, we will always take steps to resolve them as quickly as possible.

In 2023, Ofsted held a public consultation on proposals to enhance our post-inspection arrangements and complaints handling. The proposals received strong support from the sectors we inspect and regulate, and it was confirmed that the policy for handling complaints would be updated.<sup>1</sup>

In December 2023, Ofsted introduced enhanced on-site professional dialogue between inspectors and providers to help address any issues before the end of an inspection. As well as this, a new helpline was set up for providers to contact another senior inspector to discuss any concerns they may have during an inspection, or afterwards. In April 2024, we introduced new arrangements for finalising reports and challenging inspection outcomes. This includes the opportunity for complainants to

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<sup>1</sup> 'Changes to Ofsted's post-inspection arrangements and complaints handling: proposals 2023', Ofsted, November 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-ofsteds-post-inspection-arrangements-and-complaints-handling-proposals-2023>

speak with the investigating officer so they fully understand the concerns being raised. We also replaced our internal review process so complainants can directly escalate their complaint to the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted (ICASO).

ICASO reviews how Ofsted handles and responds to complaints, and it publishes an annual report about complaints it has considered.<sup>2</sup> Complainants can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman as the final point of escalation if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome after ICASO has considered their case.

We report on the number of complaints about Ofsted, and those escalated to ICASO and the Ombudsman, in our Annual Report and Accounts. Our Annual Report and Accounts for 2023-24 was published in July and is available online.<sup>3</sup> We closed 1,121 complaints last year and ICASO considered 52 complaints about Ofsted in 2023. The Ombudsman did not report on any complaints about Ofsted.

Earlier this year, we held our Big Listen to hear feedback about all aspects of our work from the professionals we work with as well as the parents, carers, children and learners we work for. We published our response in September, which included plans to further improve our complaints handling processes.<sup>4</sup>

We have established complaints about Ofsted hubs, which have centralised complaints investigations and ensured that complaints are investigated independently of the region from which the complaint originated. We will also rollout complaints panels, which we have been piloting in our schools and early years sectors since the summer, across all of our sectors. These panels include external representatives and consider whether we have handled complaints fairly and in line with our policies.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Oliver".

**Sir Martyn Oliver**

His Majesty's Chief Inspector

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<sup>2</sup> 'Annual Report 2023', Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted, 2023; <https://www.cedr.com/consumer/education/reports/>

<sup>3</sup> 'Ofsted corporate annual report and accounts 2023 to 2024', Ofsted, July 2024; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-corporate-annual-report-and-accounts-2023-to-2024>

<sup>4</sup> 'Ofsted Big Listen', Ofsted, September 2024; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ofsted-big-listen>