

EMBARGOED UNTIL 06:00 FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2026

Ofsted Coalition calls on Lucy Powell to act now as evidence of harm from Ofsted mounts

The Ofsted Coalition has written to Education Secretary Lucy Powell urging the Government to act now on the substantial evidence of continuing serious concerns with England's school inspection system.

The letter comes as evidence of the harm caused by Ofsted continues to mount, a series of recent media reports have highlighting the continuing harm and acute distress experienced by teachers and school leaders as a result of Ofsted inspections, the NAHT's call for a pause in inspections and a review of Ofsted and the publication this week of the NEU's report A Circle of Stress and Fear, which highlights the continuing impact of inspection on the wellbeing and working lives of teachers and school leaders.

The Coalition very much welcomes the growing recognition that change is needed. However, it argues that the evidence is already sufficient to require immediate action.

The letter highlights evidence from the Education Select Committee, the coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths report and previous reviews of Ofsted, alongside continuing concerns about the reliability of inspection judgements, the impact of inspections on wellbeing, and the effectiveness and independence of Ofsted's complaints process.

A spokesperson, on behalf of the Ofsted Coalition, said:

"We welcome the growing recognition that Ofsted needs to change. But the evidence is already there and we should not wait for another review before acting. This is not about abandoning accountability; it is about creating an accountability system that is safe, fair, proportionate and accountable, and that supports schools rather than causing avoidable harm."

The Coalition also stresses that Ofsted inspection cannot be considered in isolation from the wider school accountability system. Its influence extends into issues including teacher and school leader wellbeing, workload, curriculum, recruitment and retention, disadvantage and the balance between competition and collaboration between schools.

The Coalition is calling for immediate action, including:

- formal and independently scrutinised assessment and management of the health and safety risks associated with inspection
- independent complaints adjudication that provides effective redress, including the ability to require an unsound inspection finding to be corrected, withdrawn or, where appropriate, replaced through reinspection, and
- meaningful external accountability for Ofsted and its response to the substantial evidence already available.

The Coalition supports a pause in graded inspections alongside a fundamental review of the wider accountability and inspection system. However, it believes that such a review might now determine how the system changes, not whether there is sufficient evidence to act.

The Coalition is calling for an accountability system that is **Safe, Fair, Proportionate and Accountable**.

ENDS

Notes to editors

The Ofsted Coalition is a coalition of organisations and individuals concerned about the impact and effectiveness of England's school inspection and accountability system.

The Coalition's letter to Lucy Powell is available here: [Ofsted Coalition letter to Lucy Powell](#)