



INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS ADJUDICATION SERVICE FOR OFSTED

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Graham Massie
Chief Adjudicator

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted (ICASO) for the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017. This is our eighth report as the adjudication service provider for the Department for Education.

The Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) has operated this service for Ofsted since January 2009. Its purpose is to review the way in which Ofsted has responded to complaints made by members of the public who have engaged with Ofsted for a wide range of reasons. We are contracted by the Department for Education and our service runs completely independent of Ofsted. Our role is to provide recommendations, advice and guidance to Ofsted with a view to improving its complaints handling procedures.

The headline message from this report is that the Ofsted Complaints Process continues to work very well. The number of complaints which reach the stage at which we become involved (just 19 cases this year) is remarkably low in the context of Ofsted's overall caseload. Furthermore, those complaints which we do see are invariably accompanied by very thorough and considered responses from the Ofsted complaints handling team; and we are equally impressed by their openness to our recommendations and the careful consideration which each receives at the highest level in Ofsted.

Much of the credit for this success should go to the complaints handling team at Ofsted, who have been very cooperative in working with ICASO. I would also like to extend my thanks to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, for her constructive responses to our recommendations, including responding personally to every one of our adjudicator's reports.

I would also like to thank the Department for Education for their part in overseeing the service and ensuring that it is running smoothly and effectively.

CASELOAD

During the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017 the ICASO issued 19 reports, about the same as the previous year. The table below gives a breakdown of the main categories of complaints in each year since the inception of the service.

| | 1 Jan 17 31 Dec 17 | 1 Jan 16 31 Dec 16 | 1 Jan 15 31 Dec 15 | 1 Jan 14 31 Dec 14 | 1 Jan 13 31 Dec 13 | 1 Apr 12 31 Mar 13 | 1 Apr 11 31 Mar 12 | 1 Apr 10 31 Mar 11 | 1 Jan 09 31 Mar 10 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE | | | | | | | | | |
| Childminders | 1 | 5 | 6 | 13 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Childcare on non-domestic premises | 4 | 6 | 5 | 25 | 16 | 8 | 13 | 16 | 7 |
| CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE | | | | | | | | | |
| Children's homes | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Fostering service | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Local Authority children's services | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SCHOOLS | | | | | | | | | |
| Independent schools | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Primary schools | 3 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 11 |
| Secondary schools | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| LEARNING AND SKILLS | | | | | | | | | |
| Further education colleges | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Work-based learning providers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| OTHER | | | | | | | | | |
| Applicant for HMI position | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 19 | 21 | 20 | 57 | 37 | 31 | 26 | 38 | 31 |

Overall, the number of cases referred to ICASO remains very small in the context of Ofsted's considerable workload.

The vast majority of complaints came from representatives of inspected institutions (owner, manager, governing body or headteacher), and only a very small proportion were raised by students or individual parents of children attending a school or provider. Ofsted will not normally investigate a complaint that is received from a third party not directly linked to the inspected provision. This is for reasons of confidentiality as Ofsted cannot provide third parties with any further explanation of findings beyond what is already in the published inspection report.

TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Consistent with previous reporting periods, the most common issue referred to ICASO is that the complainant does not agree with the outcome of an inspection. In the 19 cases on which we reported this year, 14 included a complaint about the judgement or other statements contained within the inspection report. These are not matters on which we can comment as it is not within the remit of ICASO to review the professional judgements or decisions made by Ofsted. There were also four cases that included a complaint about Ofsted's response to Freedom of Information Act or other requests for information; and one which complained about specific Ofsted policies. These are also outside our remit.

Amongst complaints that did fall within our remit, the following table shows the number of times each type of complaint was raised:

| | 1 Jan 17 31 Dec 17 | 1 Jan 16 31 Dec 16 | 1 Jan 15 31 Dec 15 | 1 Jan 14 31 Dec 14 | 1 Jan 13 31 Dec 13 | 1 Apr 12 31 Dec 12 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Alleged failure to follow procedures | 1 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 14 | 12 |
| Alleged failure to respond in a timely manner | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Alleged discourtesy | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Alleged discrimination | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Alleged failure to apologise or accept mistakes | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 4 |
| Inspector/staff conduct | 5 | 11 | 4 | 25 | 15 | 15 |
| Alleged failure in complaint investigation | 22 | 16 | 14 | 39 | 0 | 0 |

There can be several grounds of complaint in any given case

As with last year, the most frequent heading of complaint is about alleged failures in the complaint investigation process. It is important to emphasise that this figure does not indicate a particular concern in this area, but rather it suggests that complainants generally appreciate that they can only come to ICASO once Ofsted's internal processes are exhausted.

This does not, however, appear to prevent people from still complaining about matters that are outside our remit, but it does mean that, if they are minded to come to ICASO, they bring us not only their original complaint but also their concern that the Ofsted complaints process did not address it to their satisfaction. Thus, for example, of the above-mentioned 14 cases that contained a complaint about an Ofsted professional judgement (outside our scope), 12 also included a complaint that Ofsted's complaints investigation had been insufficient insofar as it had not resulted in a correction of that judgement. This potentially brings the decision within our scope, at least as far as requiring us to consider whether or not the Ofsted complaints process has been properly completed, including the provision of clear explanations for the professional judgements which were reached. Again, however, it is not our role to question those judgements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The remit of ICASO is to investigate the manner in which Ofsted has dealt with a complaint, and to provide advice and make recommendations to improve Ofsted's systems and policies, either to address failings particular to a complaint or generally to improve complaint handling procedures.

We do not, therefore, regard our role as being to make a choice about whether to uphold or reject a complaint. Nevertheless, it is appropriate for us to report that, across the 19 cases on which we reported, we did not encounter any serious failings.

In eight cases, the adjudicators found that Ofsted had dealt with the complaint in accordance with its published complaints procedure and we did not have any advice or recommendations to make about improving the service. From the remaining 11 cases on which we did make recommendations, nine yielded case-specific recommended actions, whilst in seven instances we suggested a total of 15 general procedural improvements.

Case specific recommendations

Within the nine complaints on which we made case-specific recommendations, the same issue emerged on seven occasions, and is something we have commented on in previous reports, namely a failure by the Ofsted complaints process to fully address all of the issues that have been raised by a complainant.

We acknowledge that this is a difficult area to get right every time. Ofsted's very sensible practice is for their investigating officers to seek to narrow the issues in a complaint by grouping items together in order to deal with them as efficiently as possible. However, particularly where there is a complex fact pattern or if a complainant has not set out their real cause of concern very clearly, there is a risk that some of the elements of a complaint are missed. In such circumstances, our adjudicators typically make two case-specific recommendations, namely that any omitted issue is revisited, and the complainant provided with both a response and an apology.

Of the remaining two cases involving case-specific recommendations, both were situations where our adjudicators felt that Ofsted's final explanation of the basis of a judgement was not as clear as it could have been, so we recommended that further clarification be provided to the complainant.

General recommendations

Our adjudicators made a total of 15 general recommendations, in relation to seven cases, this year, a figure which is far higher than in previous years. It is important to emphasise, however, that this increase does not reflect any overall change in our view of Ofsted's complaints handling processes, which we continue to regard as being of a very high quality. Rather, it reflects a development of approach by our adjudicators in that, when they do identify an issue on a specific case, they are increasingly minded also to make a more general recommendation so to ensure that any wider lessons can be learned. In other words, many of these general recommendations (10 out of the 15) represent reminders of good practice rather than implying that any general short-coming has been identified. A further four general recommendations related to areas where our adjudicators identified possible clarifications (rather than changes) of particular aspects of Ofsted's Complaints Process document.

The remaining issue within our general recommendations concerned the overall operation of Ofsted's complaints process, particularly as regards the Step 2 element where a number of complainants expressed concerns that it did not necessarily involve a complete re-inspection of their setting and/or the gathering of fresh evidence, but was instead largely a review of information submitted, including the details the complainant has submitted and the issues raised as well as the inspection evidence and responses from the inspection team to the concerns raised. This approach, which is clearly laid out in Ofsted's Complaints Process, nevertheless caused concern for some complainants in that they perceived the policy as either favouring an inspector's account or excluding additional evidence that they may wish to present in support of their complaint. On one occasion our adjudicator was persuaded that, due to the particular circumstances of the case, there might well be an argument for undertaking a more extensive process and, accordingly, a recommendation was made that this should happen as a matter of course. This was not, however, a recommendation that Ofsted was minded to accept, although they did accept another adjudicator's recommendation that the description of the Step 2 process should be amended so as to highlight the approach adopted, and thereby hopefully to avoid any remaining uncertainty or confusion.

Follow up on previous years' recommendations

Although it is not part of our remit to follow up on Ofsted's responses to our recommendations in order to ensure that they are properly actioned, we do take note of whether the same general points are being made from year to year, as this might imply that appropriate remedial action is not being taken. We have not, however, identified any concerns in this regard and it remains our view that our recommendations are taken seriously by Ofsted and are appropriately acted upon.

OFSTED'S RESPONSES

We are pleased to report that every one of our adjudication reports was responded to personally by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. Every response included a specific comment and, where appropriate, a commitment to action, in relation to each individual recommendation put forward by our adjudicators.

This level of attention to complaints and what can be learned from them at the highest level within Ofsted is, in our view, very welcome.

| | 1 Jan 17 31 Dec 17 | 1 Jan 16 31 Dec 16 | 1 Jan 15 31 Dec 15 | 1 Jan 14 31 Dec 14 | 1 Jan 13 31 Dec 13 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Reports with no recommendations required | 8 | 12 | 5 | 25 | 19 |
| Reports issued containing recommendations | 11 | 9 | 15 | 32 | 16 |
| TOTAL REPORTS | 19 | 21 | 20 | 57 | 37 |
| Case-specific recommendations made | 13 | 9 | 28 | 47 | 30 |
| General recommendations made | 15 | 2 | 13 | 35 | 18 |
| TOTAL RECOMMENDATIONS MADE | 28 | 11 | 41 | 82 | 48 |
| Case-specific recommendations accepted | 9 | 9 | 28 | 46 | 30 |
| General recommendations accepted | 14 | 2 | 12 | 31 | 14 |
| TOTAL RECOMMENDATIONS ACCEPTED | 23 | 11 | 40 | 77 | 44 |

Of the 13 individual case-specific recommendations, the four that were not accepted by Ofsted all related to situations in which our adjudicators had recommended that an apparently omitted issue should be revisited, and the complainant provided with both a response and an apology. In these instances, however, after reviewing the entire case files, including the various exchanges of correspondence that take place during the course of the ICASO process, Ofsted took the view that the issues had already been adequately addressed.

The one general matter that was not accepted by Ofsted was the abovementioned recommendation by one adjudicator that the scope of the Step 2 process should be extended.

The role of ICASO is to provide advice and recommendations to improve Ofsted's complaints handling practice but we acknowledge that ultimately it is for Ofsted to adopt procedures that work best for its organisation. Our recommendations are not binding on Ofsted, but where it has decided not to comply with any recommendation we have received a detailed response and explanation from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. In each instance, we can report that we have found the explanation to be well reasoned so we have not regarded it as necessary to pursue matters any further. This judgment would not, however, preclude us from repeating a recommendation in relation to another case should we encounter a similar situation.

OFSTED'S COMPLAINTS PROCESS

This is a summary of Ofsted's complaints process, as updated slightly in April 2017 (to provide greater clarity) and again in June 2017 (to amend a few minor points introduced by the April 2017 update). Fuller guidance notes on how to make a complaint about Ofsted's staff or service are available on its website. There is a separate procedure for making complaints to Ofsted about a school or any provision that Ofsted inspects.

Ofsted's definition of a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about its actions that requires an investigation. Ofsted takes complaints very seriously and does what it can to resolve the issue. However, Ofsted states that it will not change its inspection judgements simply because they are disappointing to the provider or user of a service. Learning is taken from complaints to improve the way Ofsted works and how its staff carry out their roles.

STEP 1 Resolving concerns quickly

1

Ofsted expects that in the first instance all complaints about its work will be raised, wherever possible, as soon as they arise and directly with the individuals involved. This provides an opportunity for all parties to clarify any misunderstanding or to resolve matters of concern quickly and informally.

If a concern is about an Ofsted inspection or inspector, this should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible during the inspection visit. This includes any concern about the inspection process, how the inspection is being conducted, or the provisional inspection judgements. In most cases, concerns can be considered and resolved before the inspection is completed.

If a concern cannot be resolved directly with the individuals involved, the complainant should ask to speak to a manager about it.

STEP 2 Making a formal complaint

If concerns about an inspection or other area of Ofsted's work have not been resolved at Step 1, a formal complaint can be raised under the complaints procedure.

Complaints should be submitted to Ofsted as soon as possible and, in any event, no later than 10 working days following the incident of concern. In the case of concerns about inspections, Ofsted recommends waiting until seeing the final version of the report before submitting a formal complaint. This is because Ofsted will not normally accept additional information after the complaint process has begun. In this case, a complaint should be submitted no more than 10 working days following the publication of the report. Ofsted considers a 'working day' to be any weekday other than a public holiday, not the days on which an inspected provider may operate. Complaints submitted after the 10-working-day period will not normally be considered because they will be deemed 'out of time'. This is to ensure that concerns can be investigated promptly.

For Ofsted to consider a complaint:

- concerns must be submitted using the online complaints form (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure) which enables concerns to be set out clearly and enables Ofsted to handle complaints effectively
- complainants must provide a concise account of their concerns, details of any actions already taken to resolve these, and what they expect should happen as a result of their complaint
- complainants must provide contact details and indicate their availability for an investigating officer to contact them.

Complainants will receive a formal acknowledgement from Ofsted to confirm when the investigation of their complaint will be completed and who to contact if they have any queries.

Ofsted will normally only investigate one complaint from each inspected provider. If more than one complaint is received, Ofsted may choose to undertake a single investigation of all complaints, which may result in a single response.

Ofsted will not normally investigate a complaint about an inspection (or any other action it has taken) that is received from a third party not directly involved, such as a parent or other user of the service. This is because Ofsted do not explain inspection findings to third parties other than by publishing the inspection report. For this reason, a third party should raise any queries about an inspection directly with the inspected provider. Those involved in the inspection are best placed to explain the inspection process, the findings of the inspectors and the action that they intend to take.

Ofsted will not normally withhold publication of an inspection report or withdraw a published inspection report while it investigates a complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is because there is a public interest in the prompt publication of all reports. It is important for users or prospective users of the inspected provision, who are aware that an inspection has taken place, to be informed about the findings of the inspection within Ofsted's published timescales. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector also has a legal duty to publish or report the findings of certain inspections and investigations. Ofsted considers whether to withhold publication or to withdraw a published report on a case by case basis. A challenge to the inspection process or disagreement with the inspection findings alone are not normally considered to be exceptional circumstances.

Where a complaint is about an inspection at which a school is judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, these judgements will not be reconsidered under Step 2 of this policy. This is because all such judgements are subject to extended quality assurance procedures before being authorised on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. The school contributes to this process and may comment on the inspection findings as well as factual accuracy before the report is published. One or more of Her Majesty's Inspectors who are independent of the inspection scrutinise the judgements and consider any comments received from the school. However, once the report has been finalised, any complaints about inspector conduct or the inspection process can be considered under Step 2 of this policy. Schools can then request a review of the process for confirming the inspection judgements under Step 3 of this policy, after the Step 2 complaint investigation is complete.

When carrying out the investigation, the investigating officer will consider the information that a complainant has submitted and the issues raised. In the case of complaints about inspections, this will include, as appropriate, a review of the inspection evidence and responses from the inspection team to the concerns raised. Ofsted will not normally consider any additional concerns or documentation received after submission of a complaint.

The investigating officer will try to contact a complainant by telephone to discuss their concerns and to establish if any, or all, aspects of their complaint can be resolved quickly. Wherever possible, Ofsted will attempt to resolve complaints through professional dialogue as part of this telephone discussion. Investigating officers will confirm to complainants the agreed main aspects of their complaint that will be subject to investigation. If they are not able to speak with a complainant, they will base their investigation on the online complaint submission and any supporting documents provided.

Ofsted will provide written responses to all complaints investigated. The response will provide a conclusion on whether or not each main aspect of the complaint has been upheld and may link together similar issues for conciseness and clarity. If there are conflicting accounts and it is not possible to independently verify either of them, it may not be possible to reach a firm conclusion. For an account to be considered independent, it must be from someone not involved in the issue of concern or inspection. In these cases, the outcome will be recorded as 'no decision could be reached' and the reasons for this will be explained.

Ofsted's complaints process sits outside of the other procedures for disclosure of information held by Ofsted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Data Protection Act 1998. Details of these procedures are at: www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act. Ofsted will not normally suspend a complaint investigation while a request for information is considered, or make a formal disclosure of any inspection evidence before or during a complaint investigation. However, complaint responses will include reference to inspection evidence when appropriate to explain inspection outcomes.

Ofsted's complaints process sits outside the procedures for appeals to be made to the First-tier Tribunal (Health, Education and Social Care Chamber) against registration decisions made by Ofsted. Details of these procedures are at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-compliance-investigation-and-enforcement-handbooks. Ofsted will not normally carry out a complaint investigation while an appeal is ongoing and will not investigate issues that have previously been settled by a tribunal.

Ofsted aims to respond to all complaints investigated under Step 2 of this policy as quickly as possible. A written response will be sent to a complainant as soon as is practicable and normally within 30 working days of the date that Ofsted received the complaint. The response will include an explanation of any steps that Ofsted will take as a result of the investigation outcome.

STEP 3 Requesting an internal review

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the way in which their complaint has been handled, they can request an internal review. This must be submitted within 15 working days of the date of the response to the original complaint.

The review will not be a re-investigation of the issues raised in the original complaint: it will consider how Ofsted handled the original complaint. The review will be based on information from the original investigation and is unlikely to require further telephone contact with the complainant. New concerns raised or new evidence presented will not normally be considered as part of this review.

For Ofsted to consider a request for an internal review, complainants must:

- submit their request using the online internal review form available on Ofsted's website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure. This form enables complainants to set out their concerns about the original investigation clearly and enables Ofsted to undertake the review effectively
- be clear on which parts of the original investigation and response they want Ofsted to review and why.

If a complaint is about an inspection of a school that has been judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, any requests for a review of the process of confirming these judgements will be carried out under Step 3 of this policy.

A scrutiny panel, including a sector representative external to Ofsted, will normally consider the findings of the review before they are finalised. The panel considers whether, based on the findings of the internal review, its policy and procedures on handling complaints were followed correctly to address the complainant's original concerns. The panel adds further independence to the complaints process.

Ofsted aims to provide a written response as soon as is practicable and normally within 30 working days of the date a request for an internal review was received by Ofsted. The response will include an explanation of any steps that Ofsted will take as a result of the internal review.

The review outcome will be Ofsted's final decision on whether or not the original complaint was investigated fairly and properly in line with Ofsted's published policy. This is the final step within Ofsted's internal complaints handling procedure. Following the completion of an internal review, Ofsted will not normally take any further action.

Independent and external review of Ofsted's complaint handling

Ofsted aims to resolve all complaints satisfactorily. However, if complainants remain dissatisfied with the responses they receive, they can request an external review of the handling of their complaint from the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted. This must be done within three months from the date of the internal review response letter.

The role of the adjudicator is to investigate the manner in which Ofsted has dealt with a complaint and to provide advice to improve Ofsted's complaints handling. Details of the process for submitting concerns to the adjudicator can be found on our website at: www.ofstedadjudication.service.co.uk. Please note that the adjudicator cannot overturn the inspection judgements or decisions made by Ofsted.

If complainants are not satisfied with the outcome of the review by the adjudicator, they can refer their concerns to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Details of the Ombudsman are available on their website at: www.ombudsman.org.uk.

Complaints feedback

Ofsted takes all complaints very seriously and try to handle concerns objectively, fairly and efficiently. Complainants are invited to provide feedback on how their concerns were handled using an online feedback form, details of which are provided in response letters following complaint investigations and internal reviews. Feedback will be used to improve Ofsted's complaints handling process and improve the quality of its investigations and responses where appropriate.

ABOUT ICASO

Remit

The ICASO is entirely independent of Ofsted and our contract for this service is with the Department for Education. The service is available to anyone who has previously made a complaint to Ofsted and is dissatisfied with the response.

We can investigate the manner in which Ofsted has dealt with a complaint, and we can provide advice and recommendations to improve Ofsted's systems and practices for dealing with complaints. These may include methods for addressing failings particular to a complaint or generally to improve complaint handling procedures.

The ICASO adjudicators can investigate complaints into:

- alleged failure to follow procedures;
- alleged failure to respond in a timely manner;
- alleged discrimination;
- alleged discourtesy;
- alleged failure to apologise or accept mistakes; and
- inspector/staff conduct.

We cannot investigate complaints into issues relating to government policy or legislation; or issues where there are clear rights of appeal through a Court or Tribunal.

Powers

The ICASO cannot overturn individual Ofsted inspectors' professional judgements, nor can we award any financial damages or compensation.

Our recommendations are not binding upon Ofsted. However, if Ofsted decides not to comply with any recommendation, it must state publicly the reasons for doing so.

The procedure

The ICASO can only look at complaints which have first been through all stages of the complaints review process operated by Ofsted.

People may contact the ICASO by telephone, e-mail or letter, but wherever possible we ask them to complete a formal application form to begin the process. The application form asks them to set out full details of their complaint and also that they supply us with all supporting information.

Upon receipt of an application, the ICASO administrator will contact Ofsted to ensure that the complainant has exhausted the internal process. Once this confirmation is received, an ICASO adjudicator will be appointed by the ICASO administrator within 48 hours and details of the appointment will be confirmed to both Ofsted and the complainant.

Our initial contact with Ofsted will include a copy of the application and a request that Ofsted supply a summary of what has happened so far in the complaint process within 21 working days.

The Ofsted summary will be sent to the ICASO adjudicator who will send this to the complainant. The complainant will then be given five working days to submit any final comments on the Ofsted summary. Comments must be limited to observations about the summary and cannot include any new information or re-argument of the case.

Upon receipt of the comments, if any, the ICASO adjudicator will consider all documentation and in doing so decide if further information is required from the parties.

The ICASO adjudicator will issue brief written recommendations and these will be sent to both Ofsted and the complainant within 21 working days of the ICASO adjudicator being in receipt of all information.

Provider organisation

ICASO is run by CEDR, the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution, who were initially appointed in 2009, and have recently been re-appointed to provide the service for another term.

CEDR is an independent, non-profit organisation with a mission to cut the cost of conflict and create choice and capability in dispute prevention and resolution. Since its founding in 1990, CEDR has worked with 300,000 parties in commercial disputes and helped resolve over 100,000 consumer complaints across 30 sectors.

It operates a number of mediation and adjudicative processes for local and national government, and for other public sector parties, as well as those in the commercial sectors. It also provides training and consultancy in mediation, conflict management and negotiations skills.

The ICASO adjudication team is:

- Joanna Cavell
- Tony Cole
- Eisei Higashi
- Abigail Jennings-Mitchell
- Dr Karl Mackie CBE
- Graham Massie
- Justine Mensa-Bonsu
- Uju Obi

Key performance indicators

CEDR's contract with the Department for Education contains a number of Key Performance Indicators relating to its operation of ICASO; these cover such matters as our speed of response to correspondence and enquiries, and the length of time taken by our adjudicators to issue their report once all relevant information has been provided to them. In relation to 2017, CEDR has satisfactorily complied with all of these targets.



Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted
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