ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Responses to the consultation on proposed revisions to ISI's Inspection Complaints Policy for Association School Inspections

Full Report - July 2026

ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

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ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Introduction

1. ISI is appointed by the Department for Education (DfE) to inspect association independent schools in England. ISI is also approved by the DfE to inspect British schools overseas, and by the Home Office to inspect private further education colleges and English language schools.

2. The consultation proposed revisions to ISI's Inspection Complaints Policy for Association School Inspections, with a revised policy effective from 1 September 2026.

3. In accordance with the terms of ISI's appointment by the DfE, any changes to ISI's complaints policy must be approved by the DfE.

4. The consultation ran from 12:00 on 30 April 2026 and concluded at 17:00 on 11 June 2026 (6 weeks).

5. The consultation gave a formal feedback mechanism for stakeholders to share their views and inform our revised processes for handling complaints for association school inspections.

6. The following sections of this consultation response confirm that ISI has read all responses carefully and given them conscious consideration in accordance with the Gunning Principles.

Gunning Principle	Consultation window – action take
Formative stage	No final decision was made or predetermined by ISI on any of the proposals within the consultation window or before the analysis of the findings from the consultation and feedback.
Sufficient information	The consultation document provided the proposed revisions to ISI's Inspection Complaints Policy for Association School Inspections and explained what revisions were proposed within each of the three stages of the policy and complaint handling process.
Adequate time	The consultation provided stakeholders with a six-week window to participate in and respond to the consultation.
Conscientious consideration	ISI has carefully considered all the consultation responses. This document provides our summary of responses and sets out what changes will be made and the reasons why. This includes proposals being taken forward and any amendments being made as a result of feedback received in the consultation.

The method and scope of the consultation

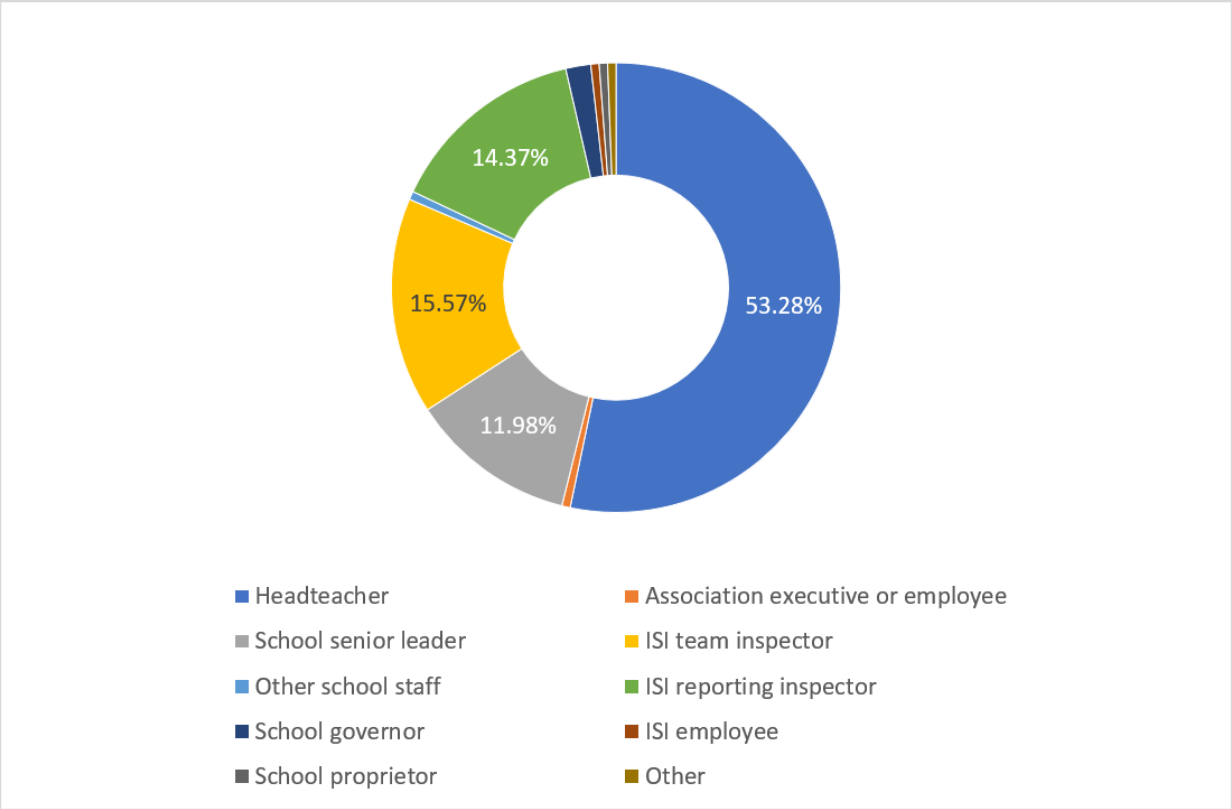
7. ISI is continually working to improve its policies and processes. The views and experiences of stakeholders are crucial in this process. The purpose of the consultation was to gather feedback about the revisions that ISI is proposing to our procedures for handling and responding to complaints about association independent school inspections, from 1 September 2026.

8. These revisions aim to provide clarity about:
   - the handling and management of complaints in each of the three stages in the policy
   - how we communicate with complainants at stage one and two of the complaint procedures to listen to and scope the complaint
   - how we will communicate our findings in response to a complaint
   - the timelines for responding to stage two written complaints
   - the role of the independent adjudicator at stage three.

9. Participants were invited to complete a questionnaire which was available online or as a hard copy.

10. All questions were optional apart from an initial screening question.

11. Respondents to the consultation identified themselves into the following groups:



12. As a result of the consultation and decisions made, ISI proposes to:
    - align the ISI Inspection Complaints Policy for British Schools Overseas (November 2025) with any revisions made in the revised ISI's Inspection Complaints Policy for Association School Inspections
    - produce a separate Inspection Complaints Policy for ISI's Student Educational Oversight Framework for Private Further Education Providers (including English language schools).

Summary of consultation

13. We are grateful to all stakeholders who took the time to respond to the consultation on the proposals for revisions to ISI's Inspection Complaints Policy for Association School Inspections, to be introduced from 1 September 2026.

14. The responses to the consultation demonstrate positive support for most of the proposals. For some proposals, respondents provided opposing views and explained why they did not support the proposal.

15. We have given due consideration to the detailed comments and differing views in arriving at the decisions we have made. The detailed and well-balanced explanations in the responses submitted has enhanced the scrutiny of the changes ISI has proposed and reinforced the important

considerations given to the impact changes may have upon schools who wish to make a complaint.

Consultation responses

16. This section contains a summary of responses to each consultation question and ISI's response to the feedback received.

17. This includes whether the proposal will be taken forward and whether ISI will make amendments based on responses received.

18. In total, **167** individuals completed the consultation questionnaire.

Proposed revisions to the operation of policy

19. This section of the consultation included five questions, **questions 2 to 6,** setting out proposed revisions to the current inspection complaints policy to promote clarity for stakeholders.

20. The statistical outcomes are illustrated in each table and in total there were **31** free text comments received about the proposals in this section.

Question 2

2. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to separate ISI's association inspection complaints policies to apply solely to this remit?				
Answer Choices			**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	5 - Strongly agree		29.52%	49
2	4 - Agree		38.55%	64
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		30.12%	50
4	2 - Disagree		0.60%	1
5	1 - Strongly disagree		1.20%	2
			answered	166
			skipped	1

21. The consultation responses show strong support for separate inspection complaints policies for association schools and the other remits that ISI inspects.

ISI response

22. Respondents confirmed that this proposal seemed sensible with a clear rationale for why separation in relation to inspection remits was helpful, giving greater clarity for stakeholders across the different remits.

23. The proposal will be taken forward.

24. ISI will develop and publish for 1 September 2026, an Inspection Complaints Policy for Association School Inspections. We will publish aligned complaints policies for British Schools Overseas and for ISI's Student Educational Oversight Framework for Private Further Education Providers (including English language schools).

Question 3

3. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to clarify that the complaints process does not provide schools with the opportunity to submit further inspection evidence?				
Answer Choices			**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	5 - Strongly agree		30.12%	50
2	4 - Agree		24.70%	41
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		12.65%	21
4	2 - Disagree		15.66%	26
5	1 - Strongly disagree		16.87%	28
			answered	166
			skipped	1

25. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. 32.53% of respondents disagreed with the proposal.

26. Some respondents confirmed their strong agreement with this proposal stating that it is important that ISI clarifies that the inspection complaints process does not provide schools with opportunities to submit additional evidence.

27. Sone respondents explained that there should be an opportunity to submit additional evidence as part of a complaint process because inspection teams may have misunderstood, overlooked or misinterpreted evidence that schools provide during inspection.

28. Some respondents noted that greater transparency and clarity is needed in the inspection complaints policy to explain why the submission of additional evidence is not permitted.

ISI response

29. ISI has carefully considered the various views expressed about this proposal.

30. ISI has processes in place to enable school leaders to raise concerns during an inspection. This gives school leaders the opportunity to talk to the reporting inspector a senior member of ISI staff. This process continues into the period following an inspection, when school leaders can raise their concerns with a member of ISI staff who did not attend the inspection.

31. When submitting a complaint to ISI at stage one and two of the process, school leaders are encouraged to explain the concerns they have in relation to the inspection that are within the scope of the complaints policy. Where complaints are raised about the judgements reached on an inspection, ISI will conduct a review of the evidence to ensure that sufficient evidence was

gathered and evaluated in order reach secure judgements.

32. Inspection evidence is gathered at the time of the onsite inspection. Inspectors gather and triangulate inspection evidence from a range of inspection activities, leading to provisional judgements which are subject to the quality assurance review process. Where there is a provisional judgement that standards are not met, there is always an evidence base review, whether or not a complaint is made.

33. The proposal will be taken forward.

Question 4

4. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to give schools the option of receiving ISI's written complaint response during the summer holiday.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		35.54%	59
2	4 - Agree		36.75%	61
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		8.43%	14
4	2 - Disagree		15.06%	25
5	1 - Strongly disagree		4.22%	7
			answered	166
			skipped	1

34. The consultation responses to this proposal indicate that this proposal is thought to be a positive approach by most respondents who noted that this in an option rather than a requirement.

35. Some respondents commented that ISI should consider leaders' wellbeing and the principle of manageability if releasing a complaint outcome and/or inspection report during the summer holiday.

36. Respondents who favoured this approach commented that receiving the outcome of a complaint during the holiday this would support leaders' wellbeing. Several comments noted the importance of receiving the complaint outcome so that school leaders can get on with tackling any matters raised as a result of the inspection.

37. Some respondents stated that whilst this proposal gives greater flexibility in offering schools the option to receive a complaint response during the summer holiday, it also has an impact upon a school's ability to share inspection findings with parents during non-term time if the report and complaint are received during the school holiday.

ISI response

38. ISI is grateful for the well-considered responses that we received for this proposal.

39. The proposal will be taken forward.

40. ISI will ensure that there are clear procedures set out in the revised policy if schools choose to receive a response to their complaint during the summer holiday.

Question 5

5. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to articulate four principles which underpin ISI's complaint handling?				
Answer Choices			**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	5 - Strongly agree		36.75%	61
2	4 - Agree		45.18%	75
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		16.87%	28
4	2 - Disagree		1.20%	2
5	1 - Strongly disagree		0.00%	0
			answered	166
			skipped	1

41. The consultation responses show overwhelming support for ISI to articulate four principles which underpin our complaint handling and how ISI will ensure procedural fairness and organisational learning through our complaints policy and practice.

42. Comments in the free text responses to this question affirm that if ISI sets out how these four principles underpin complaint handling, it will increase transparency and should give stakeholders a better understanding of each stage of the complaint process. Several respondents also noted that ISI should consider more explanatory guidance along with the policy to exemplify how the four principles work in practice.

ISI response

43. The proposal will be taken forward.

44. ISI will explain in the revised policy and procedures how the four principles of clarity and accessibility, fairness, learning and balance underpin our approach to complaints so that we promote procedural fairness and organisational.

Proposals for Stage One Informal Resolution

45. This section of the consultation included two questions, **questions 7 and 8,** setting out proposed minor revisions to the informal stage one resolution process that begins immediately after the end of the onsite inspection, as part of the post inspection quality assurance process.

46. The statistical outcomes are illustrated in the table below and in total there were **30** free text comments about the proposals in this section.

Question 7

7. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to have video calls at the informal resolution stage?				
Answer Choices			**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	5 - Strongly agree		41.32%	69
2	4 - Agree		40.72%	68
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		12.57%	21
4	2 - Disagree		2.99%	5
5	1 - Strongly disagree		2.40%	4
			answered	167
			skipped	0

47. The consultation responses show strong support for the proposal to undertake video calls with complainants at stage one, informal resolution.

48. Respondents stated that this will enable the call to become more engaging and may establish more of a rapport with the person who is handling the complaint. Respondents also felt that a video call may increase engagement, giving complainants assurance about any points for clarification through constructive dialogue and helping schools feel understood and heard.

49. Respondents also noted that a video call could improve communication and it may reduce unnecessary escalation from an informal to a formal stage. Respondents felt that it would ensure that the complaint reviewer has absolute clarity about the concerns being raised and what the complainant wishes to be considered during the quality assurance process. Respondents reiterated the need to feel properly listened to so there is no misinterpretation. Some respondents stated that it would be useful to have more than just the headteacher on the video call.

50. Some respondents suggested that a video call should be recorded and that the recording should be made available to both the school and ISI.

51. Respondents felt that there should be an option for a telephone call or video call offered to complainants at this informal stage.

52. Some respondents also noted that a telephone call, as used in the current inspection complaints policy, is sufficient and enables the complainant to set out the key concerns.

53. There were mixed views about complainants receiving a further video call to receive the outcome of the quality assurance process in relation to a complaint. Some asked if ISI would be amenable to providing a written response to the complainant at this informal stage.

54. Some respondents were positive about receiving a video call to set out findings from the stage one informal complaint. Some respondents noted that this may be helpful in helping school leaders understand the outcome of a complaint regardless of the outcome of the quality assurance process. Respondents felt this would generate better dialogue between the complainant and the complaint reviewer.

ISI Response

55. ISI will take this proposal forward and use video calls at stage one, with further clarification and amendments based on the feedback received.

56. For consistency in our policy and procedures we confirm that all calls will be video calls. This is to ensure a well-understood and fair approach for all schools.

57. We confirm there will be no written response as an outcome at this stage of the complaints process. Stage one of the complaints process is the informal stage. It is important to maintain the informal nature of the process. However, ISI will confirm with school leaders the focus of the quality assurance process as a result of any concerns raised and the actions ISI will take in light of any concerns. This will happen as part of the video call.

Proposals for Stage Two Written Complaints

58. This section of the consultation included four questions, **questions 9 to 12,** setting out proposed revisions to the stage two complaint process, the formal stage.

59. The statistical outcomes are illustrated in each table below. There were **45** free text comments received about the proposals in this section.

60. The proposals set out in this section of the consultation showed the most variation in responses to **questions 9, 10 and 11**.

Question 9

9. To what extent do you agree with the requirement to identify the paragraphs of the inspection report to which complaints about evaluations relate?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		45.51%	76
2	4 - Agree		40.12%	67
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		10.18%	17
4	2 - Disagree		2.99%	5
5	1 - Strongly disagree		1.20%	2
			answered	167
			skipped	0

61. The consultation responses show strong support for the proposal to enable complainants to be specific in their identification of paragraph numbers and sections of the inspection report that relate to a complaint.

62. Some respondents noted that this proposal will help schools to ensure that concerns are clearly stated and properly understood. Respondents felt that through a video call they would have the opportunity to clarify their understanding and any concerns in relation to what is stated in the inspection report.

63. Several respondents sought confirmation that the stage two process can also include raising a complaint about inspector conduct and the inspection process

ISI response

64. The proposal will be taken forward.

65. In the revised inspection complaints policy ISI will make clear that a stage two written complaint can be submitted once the draft inspection report is received by the school.

66. We will make clear what may be in scope as part of the stage two complaint process. The scope of any complaint can include inspector conduct, the process of the inspection and the evaluations reached.

67. We will take forward the requirement that the complainant identifies clearly the paragraph/s of the draft inspection report to which the complaint may relate and explains the basis for the complaint having received the draft inspection report. This is considered under 'evaluations reached'.

Question 10

10. To what extent do you agree with the proposal that ISI may request a video call to clarify the nature of the complaint?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		44.91%	75
2	4 - Agree		40.12%	67
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		10.78%	18
4	2 - Disagree		2.99%	5
5	1 - Strongly disagree		1.20%	2
			answered	167
			skipped	0

68. This proposal was positively received with 85% of respondents agreeing to the proposal.

69. Some respondents noted that whilst supporting the proposal for ISI to request a video call with the complainant, this proposal should not remove the right of the complainant also to request a call with ISI.

70. Some respondents expressed the wish for any video call to be recorded, and a transcript shared with the school.

ISI response

71. The proposal will be taken forward with amendments as noted below.

72. The policy and procedures for the stage two complaint will confirm that if in ISI's view clarification is needed about the written complaint, then ISI may request a video call with the complainant.

73. For the stage two formal complaint process we will introduce the use of video calls during the autumn term 2026. For consistency we will not use telephone calls, wherever possible.

74. As part of the stage two formal complaint process, ISI will provide a written summary of the transcript of the video call to the complainant. A copy will be retained by ISI. The transcript will be anonymized so that names of individuals are not included.

Question 11

11. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to extend the time for ISI to respond to a written complaint to 20 term-time working days?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		21.69%	36
2	4 - Agree		29.52%	49
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		19.28%	32
4	2 - Disagree		17.47%	29
5	1 - Strongly disagree		12.05%	20
			answered	166
			skipped	1

75. The responses to this proposal showed mixed views and some concerns about any extension to the timeline for ISI to respond to a stage two complaint. 51.21% of respondents agreed with the proposal to extend the time for ISI to respond to a stage two formal complaint, 29.52% did not agree.

76. Some respondents stated that if the timeline was extended, this may cause an anxious wait for leaders who are also managing the post inspection process.

77. Comments noted that lengthening a process that needs swift resolution is not helpful and may also

impact the recruitment of students and a delay between the outcome of the complaint and the next inspection where Standards were unmet.

78. Some respondents who supported this proposal noted that if the extended time window provides an opportunity for deeper scrutiny and a more detailed investigation of concerns, and was supported by a video call, this would be a positive step.

ISI response

79. ISI is very grateful for the detailed responses to the proposal. We have considered carefully our response to any changes to the timeline at stage two.

80. ISI recognises that leaders want a response to their complaint as quickly as possible and waiting for a complaint outcome may cause additional uncertainty in the period following an inspection.

81. ISI will ensure that the revised inspection complaints policy sets out clearly how the stage two process is conducted and the range of evidence that the stage two complaint reviewer is required to consider in completing their review.

82. ISI would like to reiterate that the stage two formal complaint process necessitates appropriate time to ensure that all complaints are handled with care and detailed scrutiny.

83. ISI recognises that we have a duty to ensure that complainants understand the complexity and careful consideration of the complaint handling process. We are also sensitive to the manageability and impact that our processes may have on school leaders and staff.

84. We will not take forward the proposal to extend the response time for a stage two complaint to 20 term-time working days.

85. However, ISI considers that 15 term-time days is a reasonable timeframe and will provide greater certainty for complaints with fewer delays. This will allow appropriate time for ISI to scope the complaint, set up and conduct a video call as necessary, and for the complaint reviewer to produce a well-considered evidence-based response.

Proposals for Stage Three referral to independent adjudication

86. This section of the consultation included **questions 13 to 17,** setting out proposed revisions to the process for complainants to refer their complaint from stage two to the independent adjudicator at stage three.

87. The statistical outcomes are illustrated in each table. There were **33** free text comments received about the proposals in this section.

Question 13

13. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to require a complainant to set out the reasons for referral to the independent adjudicator?				
Answer Choices			**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	5 - Strongly agree		37.72%	63
2	4 - Agree		50.90%	85
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		8.98%	15
4	2 - Disagree		1.20%	2
5	1 - Strongly disagree		1.20%	2
			answered	167
			skipped	0

88. Consultation responses showed strong support for the proposal that a complainant should set out their reasons for referral of a complaint to stage three independent adjudication, with 88.62% of respondents agreeing with this proposal.

89. Some respondents viewed this as reasonable so that a complainant can explain why they judge that ISI has not adhered to its complaints policy and /or has responded unreasonably.

90. There were mixed views about the proposal that on receipt of a request to go to adjudication, ISI proposed to review the complainant's request within five term time working days to decide whether the complainant has demonstrated the required criteria for referral.

91. Some respondents expressed concerns about the five-day triage process, the criteria ISI would use and who would undertake this review. Questions were raised about how ISI would communicate the decisions made within five-term time working days.

92. Respondents recognised that the role of the independent adjudicator is an important one as an impartial individual who will assess if ISI has followed its complaints policy and reached a reasonable decision. Some respondents stated that any written process to submit a request for adjudication should not become a burden and unmanageable for schools who are already within a complaint process and supporting their staff.

93. Some respondents also queried if an independent adjudicator could refer the complaint back to ISI for further review once the adjudication is complete.

ISI response

94. ISI appreciates the considered responses to this consultation question and the recognition that the independent adjudication process is an important part of ISI's inspection complaints policy and procedures.

95. The proposal will be taken forward with the following amendments.

96. Complainants will be required to set out the reasons for their request to refer their stage two complaint to independent adjudication. The reasons for a request for referral to stage three of the

policy should demonstrate why, in the complainants' view, ISI did not follow process in its handling of the complaint at stage two. Complainants will be required to state clearly the basis with reference to the handling of the stage two complaint upon which they are requesting the stage three referral and use the online form to do so.

97. The proposal to introduce triage by ISI of the reasons for a stage three referral will not be taken forward.

98. The adjudicator will consider the school's stated reasons for a request for adjudication with reference to the complainant's reasons for concern with ISI's handling of the complaint at stage two.

99. ISI confirms that it is the case that the adjudicator is at liberty to refer the complaint back to ISI as a result of their adjudication findings. This is set out in our current ISI Inspection Complaints Policy, paragraph 45, page 12. It will remain as part of the revised complaints policy.

Question 14

14. To what extent do you agree with the proposal clarifying that no further evidence will be considered at this review stage?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		21.56%	36
2	4 - Agree		24.55%	41
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		16.77%	28
4	2 - Disagree		21.56%	36
5	1 - Strongly disagree		15.57%	26
			answered	167
			skipped	0

100. Strong views were expressed about the proposal to clarify that no further evidence will be considered at stage three of the complaints process. Stating that any submission of additional evidence impedes the fairness of the on-site inspection process and the complaints process. Some respondents confirmed that this could become a never-ending process that goes beyond the scope of a complaint into a re-inspection.

101. Of the 37.13% who disagreed with this proposal the dominant themes were: that complainants had insufficient opportunity to challenge inspection evidence and judgements through the complaint processes at stage one, two and three; that by prohibiting the submission of additional evidence about aspects of a complaint, the independent adjudicator may have a skewed view of what the inspection team may or may not have looked at; the impact of concerns about inspector conduct during an inspection would not be heard if the complainant could not explain the impact on staff.

ISI response

102. Complainants will have already submitted a written complaint with supporting commentary at stage two, which may also include a video call with ISI. Complainants will already have had opportunity to talk to ISI about concerns as part of the stage one informal resolution process. Therefore, at both stage one and stage two of the complaints process, complainants have opportunities to explain their concerns and set out their complaint in full for consideration by the complaint reviewer.

103. ISI will ensure that the adjudicator will receive all of the necessary information and documentation relating to the complaint.

104. The role of the independent adjudicator is to consider whether ISI followed its complaint processes appropriately and whether ISI reached reasonable decisions in doing so. Therefore, there is no necessity for additional evidence.

105. The role of the independent adjudicator is not one of re-inspection.

106. In the revised inspection complaints policy ISI will state that the independent adjudicator will receive all relevant documentation relating to the complaint.

107. The proposal will be taken forward.

Question 15

15. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to provide the name and brief biographical detail of the independent adjudicator to the complainant?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		37.95%	63
2	4 - Agree		34.94%	58
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		20.48%	34
4	2 - Disagree		4.82%	8
5	1 - Strongly disagree		1.81%	3
			answered	166
			skipped	1

108. Most respondents, 72.89%, agreed that providing the name and brief biographical detail of the independent adjudicator is useful and important.

109. There were cautionary comments about issuing the names of adjudicators in case this led to complainants trying to contact adjudicators. A small number of respondents expressed concern about the risk that identification may lead to bias if a school contacted an adjudicator directly, additionally some adjudicators may not wish to be named.

110. Other respondents welcomed the opportunity to receive biographical details of the independent adjudicator allocated to the complaint and that sharing of the name and short biography would

increase the transparency and credibility of the stage three process.

111. Some respondents stated that there should be no contact between the school and the adjudicator.

ISI response

112. Independent adjudicators as appointed by the ISI Board, are entirely independent of the inspection process and complaint handling at stage one and stage two. They undertake adjudication work to determine if ISI has followed the complaints policy and/or has reached a reasonable decision in response to a complaint.

113. We recognise that further transparency is helpful.

114. This proposal will be taken forward.

115. ISI will ensure that the name and brief biographical details of the adjudicator will be shared with the complainant at stage three of the complaints process.

Question 16

16. To what extent do you agree with the proposal to clarify that direct contact must not be made to the independent adjudicator by the complainant, and that ISI reserves the right to discontinue the complaint if any such contact is made?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	5 - Strongly agree		43.11%	72
2	4 - Agree		35.93%	60
3	3 - Neither agree nor disagree		11.98%	20
4	2 - Disagree		4.19%	7
5	1 - Strongly disagree		4.79%	8
			answered	167
			skipped	0

116. A majority (79.04%) of respondents expressed agreement with this proposal.

117. There was consensus about the importance of reiterating this important position

118. Respondents confirmed that there must be trust in the system so that the independent adjudicator can work entirely without influence from ISI or the complainant.

119. Opposing views were also expressed with some respondents stating that there should be an opportunity to engage with the independent adjudicator to set out a complaint. Other views noted that if the complainant was able to engage with the independent adjudicator, then the complaint reviewer at stage two and/or the reporting inspector should also have an equal opportunity to present additional evidence.

120. Some respondents queried why at stage three the adjudication process is an independent

adjudicator rather than a complaint hearing panel where both parties could present additional evidence to be heard. Whilst this was not in scope for consideration in the in the consultation, ISI confirms that the process of adjudication at stage three provides an opportunity for a third party to provide an impartial review of the stage two complaint and whether ISI reached a reasonable decision and followed its inspection complaints policy.

ISI response

121. ISI will provide clear guidance in the revised inspection complaints policy that there must be no contact between the independent adjudicator and complainant to preserve the independence of the adjudicator.

122. This proposal will be taken forward.

Final question for additional comments

Question 18: Do you have any other comments or feedback on the proposals *(free text response)*

123. ISI received 24 free text comments in response to this question.

124. ISI is grateful for the helpful comments.

125. Many comments received in response to question 18 mirrored other comments submitted in sections throughout the consultation, and these have been referenced in the appropriate section of the consultation response.

126. Some respondents stated that the stage two written submission should be more open-ended and that the online form was not easy to navigate.

127. We will review the online form to consider how best to enable ease of navigation. We will also consider the reasonableness of the maximum length of the submission.

128. Some respondents sought clarification about the impartiality of ISI's complaint handling at the informal stage one and the formal stage two stages.

129. We can confirm that the review of complaints at stage one and stage two of the process are dealt with by ISI personnel who have not been involved in the onsite inspection.

130. Several comments noted how much schools want to continue to benefit from inspection and good professional dialogue, engaging positively with the inspection process. However, they noted that the complaints policy and procedures could give greater confidence that concerns raised at any stage are treated fairly and take account of the pressures on leaders and staff.

131. We appreciate the commitment to positive engagement with the inspection process. We firmly believe that school leaders have the right to complain and that it is vitally important that ISI listens to any concerns that leaders raise with us. We are committed to dealing with complaints with the care they deserve and to treating school leaders and staff with respect and sensitivity throughout the process. ISI is also committed to learning from the feedback we receive through the complaints

process, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.

132. Respondents noted their appreciation for the opportunity to engage in this consultation.

Additional information

133. ISI would like to thank all stakeholders for engaging in this consultation process.

134. The next steps following the conclusion of this consultation are outlined in the introduction to this consultation response.

135. If you have any questions about this consultation process, please email ISI at consultation@isi.net.net.

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