

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Written Ministerial Statement

Property Data

The Secretary of State for Education (Rt Hon Michael Gove MP):

I wish to inform the House of the latest position regarding the Property Data Survey – the condition survey of all school buildings.

In 2007, the previous Government abandoned the systematic collection of information on the condition of schools. Some local authorities sensibly continued to survey their schools but many did not. The last time we had a national picture of the condition of our schools was in 2005 – now eight years ago.

In his Review of Education Capital, Sebastian James, recommended that we put this right. He proposed that we gather all existing local condition data into a central database. In July 2011, I announced that we would start work immediately to collect up-to-date information on the condition of school buildings by re-surveying the estate.

My aim was to complete this by Autumn 2013. In order to make this achievable we looked to use locally prepared data where it was believed to be up-to-date and of good quality. Approximately 90 local authorities submitted local condition surveys for analysis on that basis.

Our quality assurance process identified however that locally-produced survey data was, in some cases, not accurate and, in others, inconsistent.

I have now instructed my Department to extend its central surveys to cover all schools for which local authorities have supplied data. This means undertaking an additional 8,000 surveys, which will take approximately a further eight months to complete. By next summer we will have collected up to date, reliable and validated condition information for the entire schools estate. My intention remains to target funding to where it is most needed and I will use the information from the surveys to do that from 2015-16.

Proceeding in this way means that, in 2014-15, I will be allocating maintenance funding using the same methodology as I used in 2013-14 and I will set out the detail of all the allocations and the technical basis on which they were made when I announce them.