

**Update on the Independent Review of Children's  
Social Care – September 2022.**

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**Children and young peoples scrutiny  
committee 12th October 2022 .**



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# Introduction

- The review commenced in March 2021 and published a case for change June 2021 and published its final report on May 2022, Government have re-confirmed their commitment to respond to the review by the end of the year.
- The review involved significant consultation including experts by experience, professionals and academics.
- A number of the recommendations require further clarification and debate to develop deeper understanding and detail.
- The review sets out a 5 year strategic plan with a detailed financial plan with some recommendations requiring significant change to policy and legislation.
- The review is informed by research and in- depth analysis of a number of critical areas noted below -
  1. A Revolution in Family Help
  2. A just and decisive child protection system
  3. Unlocking the potential of family networks
  4. Fixing the broken care market and giving children a voice
  5. Five missions for care experienced people
  6. Realising the potential of the workforce
  7. A system that is relentlessly focussed on children and
  8. Implementation



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# A reset in children's social care

- The review outlines a context and purpose for Children's Social Care "to enable children to grow up in loving safe stable families and where that is not possible , for care to be provide the same foundation for a good life."
- Sets both national and international context of poverty, inequality, mental health, domestic abuse illicit drug and/or substance use integration with health, immigration and asylum .
- Sets out relationships at the core of reform.
- Suggests some evidence- based interventions and some 'radical thinking' to presenting challenges.
- Establishes a clear need for investment and some proposals to support investment.



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## 2. A revolution in family help

- Family help a system "which is more responsive, respectful and effective in helping families" - reforming current approach to targeted early help and children in need "keeping more families together and helping children to thrive."
- Multidisciplinary casework including family support workers holding cases under social work supervision.
- A clearer national definition of eligibility for support and a non-stigmatising way for families to access help.
- Social workers skills more targeted to those who require care and protection
- 'Neighbourhood' and multi-disciplinary dimension to family support design.
- Introduces concepts of *Relationships Protect* change programme including a redirection for the role of OFSTED
- *National Children's Social Care Framework* – to define outcomes, objectives, indicators of success and most effective models of delivering help.
- In circumstances where there is increased risk expert child protection workers will co work with family help.



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# 3. A just and decisive child protection system

- Creation of a five-year early career framework for social workers.
- Introduces concept of expert practitioner child protection social workers. They would chair conferences, make threshold decisions, make joint visits alongside ongoing family support worker.
- Introduction of Child Community Safety plans for extra-familial harms.
- A five-year challenge on information sharing reducing perceived legislative and regulatory barriers in order to improve information sharing.
- Simplify multiple funding strands from central Government.
- Implement Taylor report on Youth Justice.
- Supports less adversary approach in family court proceedings resulting in greater parental engagement in by adapting proceedings in Court



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# 4. Unlocking the potential of family networks

- Mandatory use of family decision making before Public Law Outline.
- New type of plan – Family Network plan overseen by social worker.
- Financial allowance to ensure families get the financial and practical support they need to care for a child(ren) without the having to register as a foster carer.
- Extending access to legal aid to support interaction with the family justice system in some circumstances for kinship carers to obtain permanent legal orders
- New idea of Kinship Leave to match adoption leave
- Local Authority to develop peer support and training for all kinship carers – the Mockingbird approach
- New legal definition of kinship care taking broader range of circumstances
- Some modernising of contact arrangements for adoption



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# 5. Transforming Care

- Universal set of care standards to be developed.
- Regional Care Co-operatives (20) – will have sufficiency duty, running and creating new fostering, residential and secure and commissioning not for profit and private sector care including secure welfare and justice.
- Supporting Annex to the review including price caps, profit margins,
- Proposal for windfall tax on profits, with a view for OFSTED to intervene in the children's social care market.
- National foster care recruitment campaign to create 9,000 additional foster carers over the 5 years of the programme
- Delegated authority to foster carers by default
- IRO and Reg 44 officers to be replaced by independent high quality advocacy that would be “opt out” as opposed to “opt in” and be aligned to the children’s commissioner



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# 6. The care experience



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- 5 missions; loving relationships, double the proportion of care leavers attending university by 2026, create 3500 well paid jobs, reduce care experience homelessness, increase life expectancy by narrowing health inequalities.
- Broaden corporate parenting responsibility across wider range of public sector bodies.
- Care leaving a protected characteristic.
- Care leavers as priority for housing via statutory guidance.
- LA Independent Visitors schemes to be redesigned to allow for long term relationships.
- As part of the national children's social care framework local authorities should develop family support like Lifelong Links
- Lifelong guardianship order to enable lifelong bond
- Virtual Heads accountable for educational outcomes to 25 via revised ILACS



# 6. The care experience (cont).

- Kitemark scheme for higher education.
- Employers should be able to use unspent apprenticeship levy to create a care leaver bursary to tailor support for apprentices with care experience.
- A better range of housing options such as staying put, staying close and supported lodgings.
- Stronger safety net against homelessness by removing local area connection requirement, providing rent guarantor and increasing leaving care grant.
- The identification of poor mental health should be a part of practitioner training.
- Integrated care systems should publish plans for improving physical and mental health of children in care and young people leaving care.
- Care leavers exempt from prescription charges to 25



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# 7. Realising the potential of the workforce

- A nationally led programme to get social workers back to practice and trial flexible working models around the lives of children and families
- 5- year early career framework and national pay scales
- Action to reduce reliance on agency social workers
- 'tackle' bureaucracy and unlock social workers time so they spend less time referring and case co-ordinating and have more time and access to resources to do direct work with families as part of multidisciplinary teams
- Develop a knowledge and skills statement for family support and residential staff
- Strengthen leadership programmes aimed at developing 700 new managers in the next 5 years



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# 8. A system that is relentlessly focused on children and families

- A National Children's Social Care Framework to set the overall outcomes, objectives and principles for children's social care aligned to its purpose.
- A balanced scorecard for learning and improvement including an overhaul of what data is collected to develop more meaningful metrics to drive transparency and learning in the system.
- Data used effectively to promote resource deployment and learning via a National Reform Board and National Practice Group.
- National Reform Board to establish mechanism for Local Authorities to feedback regulatory blockers.
- Director of children's services should be the primary interface between strategic and operational leaders to facilitate effective multi agency working.
- The role of the DCS should be reviewed to reflect their role as a champion for children and families within their area.



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# 8. A system that is relentlessly focused on children and families (cont)

- Inspectorates should review their frameworks to ensure sufficient focus on individual agency contribution to the joint working.
- The child safeguarding practice review panel and the What Works Centre should take a more hands on role in promoting evidence and supporting partnerships to improve outcomes for children .
- Better national government coherence in policy making.
- Government should introduce an updated funding formula for children's services accompanied by additional resources for local government.
- Improve role of inspection – increased transparency re OFSTED judgements.
- Strengthen intervention powers when Local Authorities failing or drifting.
- The Department for Education should establish a national data technology taskforce to achieve frictionless data sharing by 2027, reduce time spent on case recording and improve the use and collection of data locally.



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# 9. Implementation

- Investment of £2.6 bn over the next 4 years i set against estimated “adverse outcome costs” of £23bn per annum.
- The review calls for a white paper to support the reforms by summer 2023.
- The review recommends the creation of a reform board phasing investment reform and improvements over 5 years
- By 2024 there should be a bill giving legal basis for the National Childrens social care outcomes framework , transforming family help, social work career framework.
- Foundations for kinship care reform, leadership programme developed and implemented between 2023 and 2024,
- Between 2024 and 2027 delivering the number of reforms indicated elsewhere e.g. the family network plan , the regional care cooperatives and early career framework.



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# Manchester's readiness

- Relationships and relationship management are strong features of practice – Our 6 Golden Threads of Practice.
- Significant experiencing of adopting and adapting evidence-based interventions, e.g. Multi systemic therapy, Mockingbird.
- Long standing commitment to strong evidence regarding impact of early help vis a vis family help with an average of 30% of families open to EH jointly worked with children services
- Early developments in relation to neighbourhood working through the engagement in MAPS.
- Approach to outcome based commissioning growing across the organisation. ( sufficiency strategy)
- Significant co working between early help and children's social care - 30% of all families open to early help are co worked with children's social care
- Relative to the early career framework - we have a well established approach to our assessed and support year in employment and positive culture regarding learning and development
- Growing use of family group conferencing in Manchester 130 referrals in since April
- An active and more engaging corporate parenting committee across partners
- Increased use of supported lodgings (10% ) and a consistent approach to staying put along with an emerging response to staying close