



The changing landscape of children's social care

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee
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The changing landscape of children's social care – Update on proposed system change/reforms

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- Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive
- Legislative changes
- Support for families
- Care System reforms
- Support for care leavers
- Improving educational outcomes

Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

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“Biggest overhaul to children’s social care in a generation”

- Introduce a consistent child identifier, making sure information can be shared between professionals so they can intervene before issues escalate.
- Mandating local authorities to offer family group decision-making
- The requirement for every council to have ‘multi-agency’ child safeguarding teams, involving children’s schools and teachers, stopping children from falling through the cracks.
- A new duty on parents where, if their child is subject to a child protection enquiry, or on a child protection plan, they will need local authority consent to home educate that child.
- The requirement for all local authorities to offer the Staying Close programme – a package of support which enables care leavers to find and keep accommodation, alongside access to practical and emotional help, up to the age of 21, ending the cliff-edge of support many experience at 18.
- New rules will require key placements providers - those that provide homes for the most children - to share their finances with the government, allowing profiteering to be challenged.
- New powers for Ofsted to investigate multiple homes being run by the same company,

Keeping Children Safe

Legislative Changes	Supporting families and keeping children safe
Mandate family group decision-making	Keep families together
Improve data sharing with a Single Unique Identifier (NHS No.)	Provide support to prevent crises
Strengthen multi agency child protection – including education	Home education and child protection

The plans

Care System Reforms	Support for Care Leavers
A more child-centered care system	Staying Close; support for care leavers
Reduce dependency on residential care	Reduce risk of homelessness
Tackle profiteering	Improve transition to independent living
Ensure high quality residential care	Improved mental health outcomes

Being Corporate Parents

“Examples of how corporate parents could meet their corporate parenting responsibilities

- Take account of the challenges that care-experienced children and young people face when designing and delivering services that impact on them.
- Taking appropriate steps to ensure that children in care and care leavers can gain equal access to and benefit from the services and support they provide.
- Raising awareness of children in care and care leavers’ needs and circumstances among those who provide support and services to them.
- Providing opportunities (including employment, work experience and training opportunities for care leavers) that would support better outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Providing clear and transparent information on services they provide and on any specific rights and entitlements.” Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive - Nov 2024

Supporting Educational Outcomes

- Develop a Kinship Local Offer
- Extending the role of Virtual School Head Role to promote educational outcomes for all children with a social worker and in kinship care
- Strengthening the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to better protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Private Market and Private Providers, and Standards- Pauline Simpson

For semi-independent providers these are commissioned via the Council Dynamic Purchasing System. Providers who join the system need to ensure compliance with the specification, which outlines the standards expected alongside Ofsted standards introduced for 16- and 17-year-olds.

For independent fostering agencies and children's residential homes we currently spot purchase these services. We rely on Ofsted's standards when dealing with any situation brought to our attention regarding a standard of care matter.

Our plan is to get both provision types, sign up to Haringey's own system (DPS) from March 2025, enabling us to have specifications, with standards incorporated.

We have also employed contracts and quality assurance officers who carry out quality assurance visits to providers. In the last 12 months, our focus has been on semi-independent accommodation due to this provision being regulated only recently. Officers have also been visiting children's residential homes and have started to quality assure foster placements.



Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Part 1- Children's Social Care

- Family group decision making
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Support for children in care, leaving care or in kinship care and carers
- Promoting educational achievement
- Accommodation of children
- Regulation of children's homes, fostering agencies etc
- Care workers

Part 2 - Schools

- Steps Local Authorities must take to promote the educational achievement of children in need or in kinship care
- Overcoming barriers to educational achievement; Raising awareness amongst those who work with children, Improving attendance and engagement

Bill is still in its early stages with its 2nd reading taking place on 8th January 2025 in the House of Commons

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

- Provisions aim to ensure that children in care, those leaving care and those caring for them, can access what they need to ensure the relevant support and resources are in place to provide for wellbeing to be achieved and promoting good educational outcomes.
- Staying Close Support
- Local Offer for Care Leavers
 - ✓ Support transition to adulthood and independent living
 - ✓ Anticipating future needs – providing assistance up to age 25
 - ✓ Keep suitable accommodation for those at risk of homelessness or being released from detention

Workforce

Workforce - Background

The London Pledge, introduced in 2022, is a pan-London commitment by Children's Services system leaders to work cooperatively and transparently to manage the agency supply chain, improve the quality of agency staff and regulate pay rates within Children's Social Work.

It has worked well in its aims over the last two years (and in its previous memorandum of understanding format) and has been recognised and studied nationally by areas experiencing similar workforce pressures.

The DfE have now stepped in and introduced a set of national guidelines which will effectively replace the London Pledge with a combination of statutory obligations and non-statutory 'recommendations' for Local Authorities across the country in respect of agency workers in the Children and Families workforce.

London Pledge vs DfE Statutory Guidance

London Pledge commitment	DfE Guidance requirement
Provision of metrics on agency usage to LiiA every quarter	Provision of metrics on agency usage to DfE every quarter
Price caps for Children's Social Work roles across London	Price caps for Children's Social Work roles to be agreed on a regional basis
Not employ 'project' or 'parachuting' case workers as they fall outside of the price cap	Ensure all staff provided as part of a project team are identifiable, costs are disaggregated for each role and governance arrangements are in place.
Boroughs have the right to implement a reciprocal 3 week notice period	All agency placements to have a 4 week notice period or a notice period aligned with that of permanent staff
6 month cooling off period for agency workers who have just left permanent LA employment.	Minimum 3 month cooling off period
Not engage agency workers with less than 3 years post qualifying experience	Not engage agency workers with less than 3 years post qualifying experience
Adopt a common referencing standard and complete reference template at the end of each assignment.	Provide a practice-based reference using a standard template and require at least two detailed references before offering assignments

Learning from Pathfinders – Test and Learn Approach

Families First for Children Pilot	Family Network Pilot aims
Family hubs and start for life	Seeking to find sustainable, family-led solutions by
Supporting families	Increasing the use of family group decision-making
Reducing parental conflict	Testing the introduction of FNSPs (family network support packages) – a recommendation made by the Independent Review of children’s social care
Strengthening families, protecting children	

Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive, Published in November 2024

What are we doing in Haringey?

Developing our Kinship Local Offer - to maintain and increase kinship care arrangements for children in Haringey, keeping the within their families, to include:

- Training offer for carers
- Family Group Decision Meetings/Family Group Conferences available and encouraged.
- Peer support groups for carers.
- Financial assessment considering the child and carers needs.
- Access to resources to support them and their children available in the local area.
- Specialist worker for the carers for advice and support.
- North London Consortium, support provided through post adoption centre available to offer advice and guidance.

Thank You!