Children's services policy update

South East Lead Members

For any follow up questions, please contact Helen Watson, LGA Children's Improvement Adviser for the South East
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Children's social care reform programme

Families First	• Help, protection and kinship care
Enduring Relationships	• Children in care and care leavers
Adoption support	• Supporting children and families through adoption
Supporting the whole workforce	• Including social workers and the children's homes workforce

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CSC reform – happening now/imminent

- Families First Partnership Programme rollout
- Information sharing duties
- Kinship – local offer, national standards, stat guidance
- Renewing Fostering plan
- RCCs, capital programme, Home Again pilots
- Financial oversight scheme, placements data
- Care leaver local offer – new requirements

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CSC reform – next year

- New duties on safeguarding partners to improve child protection practice
- Mandatory reporting of CSA
- Stat duty for VSH to champion outcomes of children in kinship care
- Conclusion of Law Commission review re: kinship
- Additional Ofsted powers over providers
- Extension of corporate parenting to more public bodies
- New social work national professional development offer (to replace ASYE)

SEND Reform



Schools White Paper

* Published Feb - meeting needs of more children in mainstream settings
* Is there capacity in mainstream settings?
* Role of health?
* How to meet need in existing system while implementing reforms across SEND, CSC, LGR..



Funding

* 90% Dedicated Schools Grant deficit write off
* Positive – but OBR forecasts £8.5bn high needs deficit by 2028, what then?



Education for All Bill

* Expected early in new year
* Working with government where possible
* Need to ensure reforms aren't watered down – will be controversial

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Early Years

Best Start in Life: Each council has a target to improve Good Level of Development amongst children by at least 9 per cent

Latest stats show 4% improvement in last year. 72.3% children now achieve GLD; national target is 75% by 2028

Healthy Babies programme funding roll out to all areas

Children's services & devolution

Government's direction

Government published "Rewiring the State", outlining intentions to devolve more powers and funding to strategic authorities.

Government's ambition is to ensure every area in England has a strategic authority in place by the end of 2028.

A White Paper is expected in November.

Potential benefits for children

Discussions are focussing on areas where scale or cross-boundary working could be most effective e.g.

- Inequalities and child poverty
- Prevention
- Strategic commissioning of specialist placements for children in care
- Mental health

Our position: current duties should remain with councils

Councils should retain their duties to support children, so decisions stay as close to children as possible.