

# The Case for Change: Your Feedback

## Introduction

On 15th June, the independent review of children's social care published the [Case for Change](#). This document, published only three and a half months into the review's work, was intended to set out our thinking early about what needs to change in children's social care and to give everyone the opportunity to tell us whether we have missed or misunderstood anything. As part of the Case for Change we asked questions on topics that we wanted to gain a wide range of views on, to inform the next phase of the review.

The Case for Change was accompanied by plans to listen to the views of people with lived and professional experience of children's social care, and an online feedback form, which was open for eight weeks after publication and closed on 13th August. Since the form closed, Josh MacAlister and the review team have been reading the responses received and reflecting on what we have heard. We are extremely grateful to all of the individuals with lived experience, members of the workforce, organisations and others who took the time to provide responses. The feedback we have received has been invaluable in shaping our thinking.

This document reflects back what we've heard through the feedback form, both in response to the specific questions we asked and about what we missed or misunderstood. Whilst we have done our best to capture the main themes we have heard in this document, the volume and range of responses we received mean we cannot capture everything. In some places we've responded to comments we've received, where we feel clarification is important, but in general this document summarises what we've heard. We will continue to reflect on the responses we've received in the next phase of the review.

We also received a range of helpful responses on some of the data and evidence used within the Case for Change from members of the academic community and others. We have kept a note of these and intend to update the references in the Case for Change when we publish our final report to ensure that it is a useful reference document after the review. We have responded to specific factual points raised by respondents where we think there is merit in clarifying our interpretation of the evidence at this stage.

This is not the only way we've sought to gain feedback on the Case for Change, as we know that not everyone will want to provide written feedback. So in addition the team have been out meeting with a wide range of individuals and organisations to gain feedback, including through our [Bridge the Gap events](#). Since the start of the review we have heard from over 1000 people with lived experience, and a further 1000 people with professional experience of children's social care. As this engagement is continuing into the Autumn, we will publish a

summary of our engagement events since publication of the Case for Change separately in the coming months, as we did with our [engagement work](#) leading up to the publication of the Case for Change.

If you have thoughts about either the Case for Change or the wider issues the review is considering, you can contact the review team at [review.childre socialcare@education.gov.uk](mailto:review.childre socialcare@education.gov.uk) and we encourage you to publish your views and ideas, share them on social media and talk about them publicly where possible.

## Who we heard from

We received a total of 324 responses to the Case for Change. Of these, 238 responses were submitted via the feedback form and 86 responses were submitted directly to the inbox<sup>1</sup>. Of these, 107 were responding on behalf of an organisation and a full list of organisations who responded to the Case for Change is included in Annex A of this document. It should be noted that there have been a range of ways that we have heard feedback from the Case for Change, including through events and meetings, and so this document is not necessarily representative of all organisations we have heard from. However, this document is focused on what we heard through the written responses.

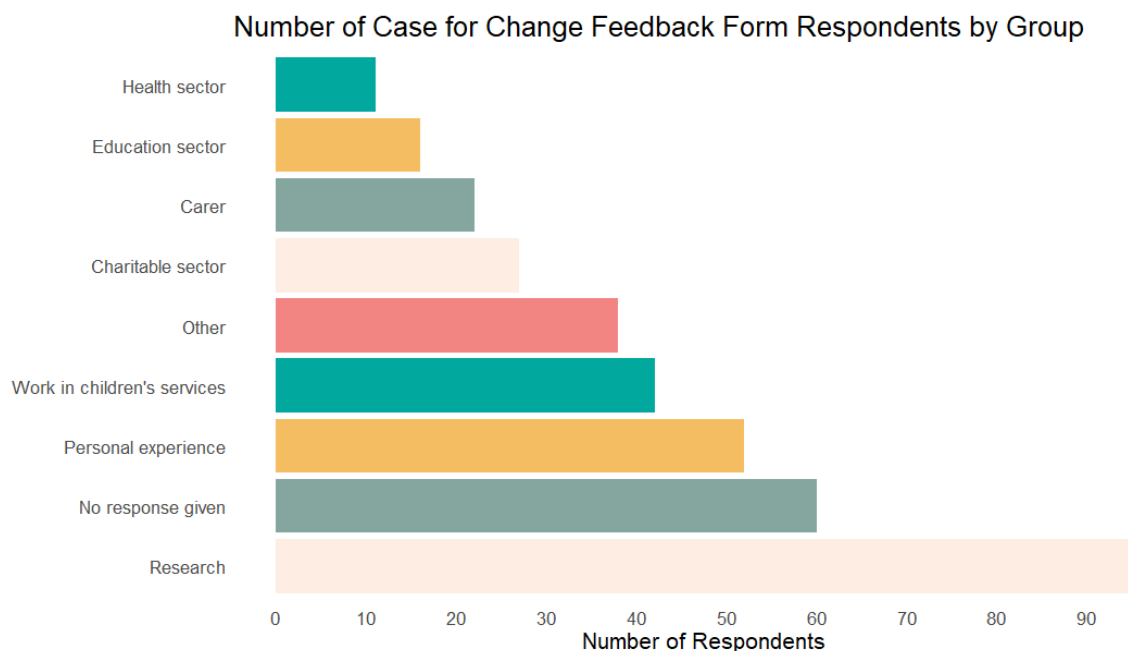
Those who responded through the feedback form were asked to select an option that best represented themselves or their organisation. The breakdown of respondents are set out in the chart below.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The number of respondents is the total number received through the feedback form - due to the set up of the form we are unable to verify where an individual or organisation submitted multiple responses and so some responses may have been from the same respondent. The number of responses from the review inbox is based on submissions to the inbox which were clearly labelled as responses to the Case for Change,.

<sup>2</sup> This breakdown is based on self identified characteristics of respondents. Respondents were able to select more than one box and so the total exceeds the number of responses received. The researcher category is likely to be unrepresentative as was used in the case of several similar responses.

## Respondents to the Case for Change



## Chapter One: Context

Question one: What do you think the purpose of children's social care should be?

In the Case for Change, we asked for views on what the purpose of children's social care should be. This is because we think a clear and comprehensive articulation of the purpose of children's social care will be an important part of the review's final report. The feedback form is one way that we have sought to get views on this question, but we are using a wide range of different engagement methods to get a diverse range of views on this question.

A common thread throughout responses were about children's social care's purpose in keeping children safe, supporting them to reach their potential and working to enable children to stay with their family wherever possible. Many respondents felt that social care needed a much greater focus on prevention and support as part of its purpose. Examples of responses includes:

*"The purpose of Children's Social care should be to support families to find solutions to their own problems. Children's social care should also protect children where*

*needed but this should be done in a way that makes best use of the networks and resources that families have. Children's Social Care should adopt approaches to collaboratively working with whole family networks to achieve improved outcomes for children. Whilst processes are necessary Children's Social Care Practice should be needs led."*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

*"It should be about facilitating the development socially, morally, academically and economically of the child as you would do with your own children. If the state is acting "in loco parentis" they should behave as a responsible parent would and nurture the child accordingly. At least facilitate that nurturing. Children should not be warehoused until they are 18 and then abandoned.*

**Respondent - personal experience of children's social care**

*"The children's social care system should be a place where every professional, family, teacher, social worker, and carer wraps around a child or young person to enable them to experience the safety, stability, and love that they need. It should enable children and young people to reach their potential, securing positive outcomes that reflect a parity with those who have not had experience of the care system. This must be the aim of the targeted and intentional support and care that should be wrapped around them."*

**Home for Good**

Other points made about the purpose of children's social care included:

- That our vision for children's social care needs to form part of a wider cross government ambition for childhood, that spans across all services working with children and families;
- That the contribution of partners, particularly health, education and the police, should be part of the core purpose of children's social care;
- That the purpose of children's social care should be couched in terms of protecting and promoting children's rights and that there should be explicit reference to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*;
- Some respondents questioned whether social care needed a different purpose when it was working with families of disabled children given their specific experiences of the system;
- Some respondents pointed to the existing duty on local authorities under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and as far as is compatible with that, promote the upbringing of children within their families as a guiding purpose for the system.

## What did we miss or misunderstand in Chapter One?

The question asked in Chapter One focused on the purpose of children's social care, the wider chapter also covered the outcomes of children involved in children's social care, recent trends in demand, and the inequalities that exist in which families have contact with children's social care. Some of the points raised by respondents about what we missed or misunderstood from this chapter:

- Some respondents felt that in our discussion of the poor outcomes children experience, that we don't give enough prominence to international evidence that poor outcomes are a result of maltreatment and trauma and should not be attributed to children's social care. We agree that it is not right to attribute poor outcomes to the children's social care system alone. However, we do know that children's social care has the ability to improve these outcomes and also that we should not accept that it is inevitable that children will go on to have such poor life experiences. That is why we continue to believe that "we should not casually accept such poor life experiences" for those in care.
- Some respondents felt that we should give more prominence to the role that the immigration system plays in the overall children's social care context.
- Respondents generally agreed with the review's position of poverty as a "contributory causal factor" for involvement in children's social care, however some respondents felt we should go further in our discussion of the role of poverty and the impact of Government policy on this.
- Some respondents felt the needs of specific cohorts of children such as young carers and children with special educational needs and disabilities warranted more discussion.

## Chapter Two: We're not doing enough to help families

Question two: What is the role of the children's social care system in strengthening communities rather than just providing services?

A key theme amongst respondents was that the community response is weakened by a limit in community and grassroot initiatives and services. Many respondents outlined the need to increase investment to provide more universal service provision to reduce stigma, as well as the important role of wider community hubs and infrastructure, such as youth clubs and libraries.

*“Communities such as local shops, local police stations, libraries and youth centres should have direct links with each other. Young people need youth clubs, sports centres, dance studios, music studios to keep them focussed on positive activities which can provide fulfilment and happiness to them. Funding being cut particularly to youth clubs is negatively impacting young people.”*

**Respondent - children’s social care workforce**

Some respondents also felt that it is not the role of children’s social care to strengthen communities, but that they should play a key role in understanding the needs of the communities they serve and this should be used in decision making processes about service provision by the local authority and partners. Others felt that there was an important role for children’s social care in doing this. Many respondents highlighted the importance of co-production - both in terms of children’s social care working with the wider local authority leadership, as well as involving the community in the design and decision-making process of service provision.

*“The report questions the “role of the children’s social care system in strengthening communities rather than just providing services”. There is no doubt that strong communities can play an important role in supporting families. However, we do not believe that the task of strengthening communities is one that falls to children’s social care departments. Instead, the wider local authority has a key role here as leader of place, alongside central government, the voluntary and community sector, schools, police and others”.*

**Local Government Association**

*“We agree that the role of the children’s social care system should not be limited to simply providing services. This role should extend to supporting communities to build their capacity too. This also means acting as enablers to help families in communities to support each other where there is not child protection concern. To strengthen communities, the children’s social care system should be prepared to step back and allow communities to develop a greater ownership of local services. This means investing more in local community grassroots organisations and supporting them to thrive.”*

**New Local**

Other points made by respondents include:

- Children’s social care should understand the community assets available in their area and maximise their use, signposting where appropriate.

- That it is important to raise awareness of vulnerable children in the community more broadly, including improving understanding of the community role in protecting children.
- Families with disabled children face particular challenges in utilising community resources.
- Extended family and friends are not utilised enough to support families.
- The important role of the voluntary sector in reaching “hard-to-reach” families, and there needing to be a closer working relationship between these organisations and children’s social care.
- The importance of making sure children in care are integrated into the communities in which they live.

Question three: How do you think we should address the tension between protection and support in Children’s Social Care that families describe? Is a system which undertakes both support for families and child protection impeded in its ability to do both well?

Some respondents agreed that the system is impeded and cannot deliver support for families and child protection well in parallel - this included reflections from those with personal experience and (to a lesser extent) those working directly with children and families. .

*“I felt uncomfortable managing both sides of my job. Two faced. Service users telling me their secrets in confidence because they wanted help, it to then be asked to use it against them e.g. in pre proceedings. True child protection should be separate, more akin to police investigation, which is fairer and more rigorous.”*

**Respondent - children’s social care workforce**

*“Yes very impeded. Most social workers are unable to support families who need support unless child protection is also needed. This must change. Families need support in order to prevent it getting to the stage of child protection.”*

**Respondent - personal experience of children’s social care**

*“The review describes the tension between providing support and protection. We see this played out in our casework, with complaints made to us about children’s social care often describing a perceived bias against a parent, or a sense of being coerced into taking a particular course of action.”*

**Local Government Ombudsman**

Others, generally representing the workforce or other organisations working within children's social care, outlined that it is crucial that both functions remain in the same system, including to prevent siloed working where inter-agency working is already poor and to avoid families being bounced between services as a result of their needs and level of risk constantly changing.

*"I broadly support the areas identified for the Case for Change, but the only area I do disagree with is the discussion on separating support and protection...From a practical perspective, we know that inter agency working is generally poor, to add another variable would create chaos in the system, especially when families can move between needing support and intervention for protection quickly..."*

**Respondent - work in education**

*"Separating family help from child protection would be a profound mistake. Would mean parents being assessed and judged by people who have no grasp of their journey/needs."*

**Respondent - local authority**

A recurring theme was the view that the tension can be tackled by addressing social workers' approach and capacity. Responses emphasised that practitioners need to be sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable and have the capability to balance risk management with relationship building.

*"I think it is possible for the system to provide both support and protection and skilled practitioners can offer this. However, lots of practitioners are not sufficiently skilled at this. It also takes an extraordinary amount of empathy and professionals are often too overloaded and burnt out to be able to attune properly to families and make those connections. There needs to be a culture shift in the system to supporting professionals to be able to do this work."*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

*"Social workers need to have the ability to relate to a wide range of parents - if they are straight out of university they do not have sufficient life experience and therefore tend to go by the book than by their instincts. Most social workers do not have children of their own and therefore have no lived experience of the strain bringing up a child can place on vulnerable adults. They do very little to reassure parents and alleviate their anxiety. Instead they fall back on the law as their reason for being involved with the family. This then creates a barrier."*

**Respondent - personal experience of children's social care**

The power imbalance between children's social care and families was raised frequently by respondents and some felt that families should have a greater ability to hold social workers



to account. Ideas included improving the complaints process, access to independent advocacy and ensuring that social workers' notes are accurate.

*"Social services need to be held accountable.. the complaints system is impossible"*

**Respondent - personal experience of children's social care**

That this tension is particularly acute for families with disabled children was also raised.

*"The tension between providing support and protection is particularly relevant for children and young people with SEND."*

**National Network of Parent Carer Forums**

*"Many families with disabled children feel unsure about approaching social care for advice and support."*

**Complex Needs Coalition**

The lively debate generated by this question demonstrates how important this issue is, which is why it is one of [three dilemmas](#) we have highlighted that the review needs to continue to grapple with as it makes recommendations. As the review moves into its next phase, we want to continue to hold space for this debate to hear both from those with lived and professional experience of the system about how children's social care can work in true partnership.

What do you think about our proposed definition of family help? What would you include or exclude in your definition?

Many respondents thought our proposed definition was helpful and forms the right foundation for a shared collective understanding of family help. Respondents also made the important point that any definition needs to be accompanied by a clear sense of what support is available in practice to families and how family help would be implemented.

*"I think it offers a good definition to what we should be doing. The key element is building trust and recognising the children's and families rights."*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

*I think that the definition is great. I think the challenge is how it is implemented. -*

**Respondent - voluntary sector**

*"The definition is comprehensive and reflects the need to understand families as whole family networks working and collaborating with them to achieve improved outcomes for children"*

**Respondent - local authority**

There was some debate about whether the concept of family help should be focused before statutory thresholds or (as the review's definition suggests) whether it should also cover all families that face significant challenges, including those subject to a child in need or child protection plan.

*"We agree that a common definition would be beneficial for the sector and welcome the outlined principles, particularly on support for the family unit. However, we strongly urge the Review to revise the vision for family help to be a primarily preventative service, designed to support families before they reach the threshold for support under Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989."*

**Action for Children**

*"I agree the boundaries need to be porous. Families are not static and need change over time."*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

We received many useful ideas from respondents about areas which were felt to be missing from the definition. These include:

- Making explicit the role of different partners in delivering help to families and the wider needs for reform in these services (e.g. mental health and housing services).
- Being more explicit about where help needs to directly address children's needs and to listen to what they want and need.
- The importance of working with families to decide what help is needed, as well as respecting different choices that families make about how to live their lives.

*"There is much that is relevant in this definition. However, there is no mention of the direct needs of children for help and to be heard. Given the evidence concerning children's mental health needs, the impact on them of domestic violence and parental alcohol misuse, and more, it is vital that children's needs for support are heard and acted upon in the context of the family's needs and strengths. It is not just about support to adults."*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

Respondents also pointed out specific cohorts of families and children that they felt it was important that any definition of family help addressed. These included:

- Being clear that family help would include support after removal of children.
- Additional needs of families where English is not their first language.
- The needs of young carers.
- The needs of adults with disabilities who are caring for children.

## What did we miss or misunderstand in Chapter Two?

Chapter Two made an overarching argument that the children's social care system too often focuses its efforts on investigating and assessing parents rather than providing the help that families need. In making this argument, we pointed to the three-fold increase in section 47 investigations that did not result in a child protection plan over the past 10 years, as well as the reductions in spend on help.

In responding to the Case for Change, Ofsted gave their view on the balance of support and protection:

*"The review is right to highlight the increase in the number of child protection inquiries as worthy of serious investigation... Our inspection findings, generally, do not suggest that local authorities are carrying out unnecessary child protection investigations. Generally, we are more likely to report that a local authority is too slow to take decisive action when children may be at serious risk of harm."*

**Ofsted**

In chapter three of the Case for Change, the review has highlighted the need for greater decisiveness and urgency at times in relation to significant harm. We are working with Ofsted to interrogate the area of child protection investigations further - including whether inspections look equally for evidence of under and over investigation. We think it is important to resolve why there has been such a significant increase, not just in section 47 enquiries themselves, but in those that do not result in a child protection plan. The review accepts Ofsted's position that 84,000 children had a child in need plan 45 days after the start of a section 47 enquiry. However, the review has not seen evidence from Ofsted or other respondents to suggest that a section 47 enquiry is the most appropriate mechanism for families to receive support under a child in need plan, or evidence to justify this volume of investigations or the rise over the last decade.

Whilst many respondents welcomed the focus on family support, some respondents rightly cautioned the need to remember that sometimes the state will need to intervene and care will be the right option for some children. The point was also made that even though it is true that the majority of parents come into contact with children's social care because they are parenting in conditions of adversity, that doesn't mean harm isn't coming to children.

*"It will be important that the emphasis on family support in the review, which is welcome for those children and young people for whom it is right, should not lead to a failure to act if children and young people are at risk of harm."*

**Coram Voice**

*"In our experience, lots of families become involved with children's social care who have caused or are likely to cause significant harm to their children, as well as living*

*in adversity - that doesn't mean harm is deliberate, but it also doesn't mean there is not significant harm."*

**Family Action**

Some respondents have argued that the review's definitions of 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' spending are misleading, because we categorise spending to support children in need as 'non-statutory' although legislation requires local authorities to provide support to children under section 17 of the Children Act.

*In much of their argument they confuse 'statutory' with 'non-voluntary' and more 'coercive' interventions, and appear to be saying that Section 17 (the section that says local authorities have to provide appropriate services to children they assess as 'in need') is not 'statute'.*

**Professor June Thoburn**

The Case for Change used this categorisation because, unlike child protection and looked after children statuses, there are no individually owned duties in section 17. Whilst local authorities have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area, there is discretion about what support is provided and so statutory intervention is sometimes used as shorthand for interventions at section 47 and for looked after children. We recognise that our use of the 'statutory' vs 'non-statutory' definition was open to misinterpretation, but we do not believe it was inaccurate. The Case for Change is clear about the statutory duties that exist on local authorities and discuss this in more depth on pg. 35. One suggestion was that we should use a 'safeguarding' and 'non-safeguarding' categorisation instead, although there are limitations with this division. We will consider how best to describe this distinction in spending in future review publications.

## Chapter Three: We need a child protection system that keeps children safe through more effective support and decisive action

### Question Four: How do we raise the quality of decision making in child protection?

The most common theme in response to our question about decision making, was the need for better multi-agency work with genuine joint decision making. This was particularly notable in the social care workforce which identified the need for better sharing of information, constructive challenge from colleagues and shared responsibility for risk. Respondents with personal experience of social care also thought that engagement with wider groups of

professionals was important in challenging bias that social workers may have. Responses noted differing organisational cultures, the need for partners to step up, but also how social care also needs to ensure there are opportunities to input and to listen to other partners.

*“Different agencies and professionals may sometimes have conflicting goals, so understanding each other’s goals and remits is vital to agree effective plans and make decisions around risk. If key partners are not invited to meetings, then key information is often not shared, so a more flexible approach to meeting times and also ways to contribute to meetings need to be adopted.”*

**South London and the Maudsley NHS Trust**

*“Listening to family workers, personal advisors, nursery staff more. Currently there is a culture of regardless of your experience and education, if you don't have a degree in social work and don't agree with the social worker, your opinion is irrelevant. Regardless of how well you and the social worker know the family.”*

**Respondent - children’s social care workforce**

Many respondents agreed that organisational cultures were important, particularly how these could help manage anxiety and support social workers to hold risk and empower them to make decisions confidently. This tended to focus on the complexity of the work and the inherent difficulty in assessing the likelihood of a negative outcome. The importance of high quality management and regular supervision were highlighted by the social care workforce particularly as crucial aspects to creating supportive organisational cultures.

*“Good decision making is undertaken in a culture of trust, where decisions are shared as required; where there is reflective supervision and good management support; scrutiny, assurance and oversight; and where we take account of the views and experiences of children and families as experts in their own lives”*

**Respondent - local authority**

Social work training, knowledge and ability were named by a broad range of respondents. Providers of children’s services highlighted the importance of improved social work education and ongoing professional development. Carers and those with personal experience of children’s social care highlighted specific areas that social workers should have better knowledge on such as trauma, disability, domestic abuse and child psychology. Those in the education sector highlighted SEND as an area where social workers have less knowledge. A few respondents focused on broader skills including managing conflict and analytical thinking and writing.

We received some responses criticising this section for unfairly representing social workers.

*“There was concern that despite being peppered with a few platitudes, the Case for Change explicitly mentions social workers acting too soon, being unskilled,*

*unknowledgeable, not understanding the profound impact of change and loss and having poor decision making skills”.*

**British Association of Social Workers**

The review focused on the impact of organisational cultures, bureaucracy and increasing numbers of child protection cases on the ability to hold risk and get to know families. The Case for Change also highlighted that increasing proceduralisation of practice were poor replacements for professional knowledge and judgement. Alongside this, the review highlighted research and the views of those with lived and professional experience that there are gaps in social worker knowledge and skill. We do not suggest that the skills of individual social workers are the main cause for system issues.

Other points raised by respondents included:

- Some respondents with personal experience of children’s social care highlighted the need for more accountability and checking of professional decisions.
- Some respondents felt there was a blame culture in social work that impacted on risk aversion.
- The impact of high profile cases on risk aversion within local authorities
- The role of Ofsted in influencing decision making and practice
- The impact of high case loads leading to limited time working with families and critically reflecting on cases
- The need for good relationships and open and honest communication with families that they can understand to come to effective and fair decisions
- The role of advocacy to ensure children’s voices are heard in decision making as an important means of ensuring their rights are respected

How do we fill the accountability gap in order to take effective action to keep teenagers safe?

The most common theme for this question focused on the need for better join-up between agencies, principally police, health, education and social work. Many comments referred to the current system as fragmented, with agencies working in isolation. Suggestions to improve multi-agency working included multi-disciplinary teams to respond to teenagers, a central agency to be responsible for coordinating the response, and joined-up working to be underpinned by frameworks that promote collaborative working both at a local and national level.

*“On extra familial harm, it is likely to be more helpful to reflect on the best ways in which agencies can work together successfully than to focus on where exactly blame for failure needs to lie... the multi -agency partnership needs to think creatively about how to work together at different levels from system to individual child”*

### **Respondent - local authority**

Another key theme related to support for families, indicating that services should focus more on supporting, strengthening and equipping parents, as they are ultimately accountable for their teenagers' safety. Respondents also emphasised the need for a cultural shift away from blaming parents and highlighted the importance of engaging families by involving them in safeguarding planning.

*"If we are holding parents and professionals accountable we need to lay out our expectations and strategies. You can't hold someone accountable if they aren't given the tools. It needs to be a collective accountability. Parents can't be expected to know everything or know what to do, just as professionals can't be expected to know what is going on 24 hours a day".*

### **Respondent - children's social care workforce**

Throughout the responses there was also an emphasis on the role of the community, including in particular the role of schools. Respondents stressed the need for a whole community approach to vulnerable teenagers, both as part of interventions such as contextual safeguarding that require community buy-in, but also as a preventative measure. Respondents highlighted the importance of community belonging and suggested that more resources need to be directed at community programmes, youth centres, activities and mentoring.

*"We need community based early intervention programmes based both in schools and local communities that identifies young people at risk with rigour ... and uses an evidence base, while also considering local context, to match children to programmes that affect behaviour change, build confidence and positive peer relationships. Such programmes should work to build community leadership capacity and develop skills in the local area."*

### **West London Zone**

Other points made by respondents to this question included:

- The system is too process driven and inflexible, consequently professionals are constrained by the system's focus on family harm, which results in ineffective interventions that are not targeted enough to teenagers' needs. Having an overly risk averse approach can have the opposite effect of pushing teenagers away.
- The detrimental impact of exclusion on teenagers' safety was frequently mentioned, including the need for implementation of the Timpson review's recommendations
- An underpinning issue is the criminalisation of children, societal and professional thinking needs to shift from seeing children as 'a risk' and instead see them as 'at risk'
- The increasing role of the online world in harms outside the home and the ability for professionals and parents to deal with this
- The increasing issue of peer on peer abuse as a threat to children

- The need to focus on adult perpetrators and for the police to have greater powers of disruption
- The need for more training for professionals on harms outside the home and relationship-based practice
- The role of early help earlier in children's life and the impact later down the line of failing to support children
- The particular risks faced by young people who are homeless and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

## What can we do to support and grow kinship care?

Responses to this question overwhelmingly pointed to the need for better support for kinship care. Examples of support that respondents felt would be useful included financial support, training for kinship carers, parenting interventions, childcare entitlements, grief and bereavement support, counselling support and emotional support and practical support. Some responses called for a parity of support with foster carers and highlighted that unsupported kinship care will not lead to an improvement of outcomes for children. Other respondents felt that kinship carers should be supported through the benefits system. Some pointed to the perverse incentives that happen when Special Guardianship Orders are not supported, leading kinship carers to pursue becoming a foster carer.

*Kinship care can be very positive but workers need to ensure that carers are well-supported to care for children, otherwise can risk young people being put in a caring situation themselves (e.g. if they are placed with grandparents who are ill or disabled)"*

### **Leicestershire Cares**

Another consistent theme among responses was the need to improve assessment processes for potential kinship carers. Some of the challenges highlighted to us included the need for prospective kinship carers to meet arbitrarily high expectations of assessors or to meet the same standards as foster carers, intrusiveness and lack of support through the process, lack of diversity on assessment panels and perceptions of class bias and short deadlines for completing assessment driven by court proceedings' timeline. Some respondents also criticised what they saw as a failure of the system to consider family as a support network before children are assessed as needing to be removed from their families and kinship options are sought and assessed.

*"Explore kinship care earlier in process before getting to care stage - eg CiN plans don't always look at wider family support, could encourage regular stays with kin and provide kin with training earlier to support parents - it is too often a last minute dash to find kinship carers who have little time to think, adjust or understand implications of being a kinship carer."*



## Sheffield Young Carers

Other points made by respondents in response to this question included:

- Lack of flexibility to allow for creating shared care arrangements
- Misaligned and perverse incentives in the system where support is conditional on legal status rather than need, leading to kinship carers staying in fostering due to lack of formal support in other kinship routes even though the cost of a child staying in foster care outstrip the cost of support that could otherwise be provided
- Need for robust assessments of potential kinship carers to avoid exposing children to more harm and perpetuating intergenerational patterns of abuse
- Perception that social workers prefer other permanence routes and would dismiss kinship carers on that basis
- The need for there to be more attention given to multi-national kinship care

Given the clear evidence of positive outcomes and value for money of programmes that support parents at the edge of care and post-removal, why aren't they more widely available and what will it take to make this the case?

The most consistent theme from respondents was that intensive support is not available because of a lack of funding and resource to deliver these programmes and the fact there are not specific statutory requirements. Some responses drew parallels with why wider evidence-based interventions are not implemented, such as: a siloed funding landscape; short-term funding rounds; and not being implemented for long enough to demonstrate good outcomes. A lack of strong and focused leadership within local authorities and across partners was also raised as a reason that these programmes aren't invested in.

*"These are services that both cost money and are non-statutory - local authorities simply don't have the capacity to provide them."*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

*"Pause has experienced first-hand the challenges of making 'post-removal' services more widely available – we see the main issues as: lack of understanding of the scale; the challenge of effectively scaling innovation; and the need for sustained investment in innovation that achieves impact."*

**Pause**

Some responses also highlighted that services such as these, and the families that need them, are subject to stigma and it can be felt it's "too late" to address the issues they are experiencing.

*“Systemic failings at this stage where the families are written off without a chance”*

**Respondent - personal experience of children’s social care**

The capability and capacity of the workforce was also raised, including practitioners not having the time or confidence to deliver intensive support.

*“Lack of experienced and confident practitioners with the time and resources to provide the interventions”*

**Inspire Scotland**

*“There are not many practitioners to complete this work and so it is only the extreme cases which receive it due to case loads and time management. More training about how to deal with the edge of care issues and where to signpost may help this.”*

**Respondent - children’s social care workforce**

Some respondents challenged that edge of care programmes were beneficial.

*“We would challenge the evidence for positive outcomes of these programmes as we believe it is not good for the child to repeatedly be on the edge of care. Children and young people on the edge of care are often suffering from ACEs, neglect and abuse. The cycles of intensive support and withdrawal by social care and other professionals not providing universal services is not conducive to positive outcomes for children and young people.”*

**Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health**

## What did we miss or misunderstand in Chapter Three?

Alongside decision making, harms outside the home, kinship care and intensive support, Chapter Three also covered adoption, care proceedings and the wider child protection system. Points made by respondents about the wider chapter included:

- Some respondents felt that the Case for Change did not give sufficient focus to adoption and the decline in the number of children placed for adoption in recent years. Others felt that there was not enough focus on negative impacts of adoption on children and their parents
- Some respondents felt the 26 week court timescales means there can be a rush towards permanency
- The fact that the current child protection system doesn’t work effectively for children living away from home, for instance in Youth Offending Institutes
- That this section should talk in more detail about the role of safeguarding partners.
- Many respondents agreed with the point that judges should be able to gain feedback on the outcomes of their decisions

## Chapter Four: Care must build not break relationships

If we were creating care today that was good enough for all our children what would it look like?

A number of the responses to this question focussed on the importance of safe, stable and loving relationships for children in care, the importance of quality foster and residential care and the need for the review to spotlight kinship care as an option for more children. Some responses questioned whether creating a system that is 'good enough' for all our children was ambitious enough for the review to be aiming at. There were also some respondents who felt some children have a good experience of care, and that it can provide a better experience than if they had remained with their birth families.

*"We believe we should not just aspire to create a care system that is 'good enough' but the state should aim to be the best parent it could be. Part of this is a system that both cares for and cares about children and young people".*

**Coram Voice**

*"At the heart of the care system, we need a care system that 'cares' for children and provides them with the love and support we would all expect for our own children. The current system too often falls short of these expectations."*

**Barnardos**

Responses offered a large number of different suggestions for how care could be improved. Some responses highlighted the importance of keeping brothers and sisters together, and that splitting up families should always be a last resort. Building on this point, some responses suggested that the care system should prioritise placing children with extended family members where possible, and that children's views should be considered in deciding where they live, as a means to ensuring relationships aren't broken.

*"Contact plans for looked after children should not be one size fits all. In addition to this contact plan they should include wider family - aunts, uncles, grandparents cousins and so on".*

**Respondent - personal experience of children's social care**

We received a large number of responses about foster care to this question - both from foster carers and from care experienced adults that had lived in foster care. Many responses highlighted the need for foster placements to be stable, loving and offer high quality support to children - some were clear that not all foster carers could offer this. Foster carers told us that they should be more involved in decisions that affect the lives of children in their care given that a foster carer can often be the person who knows the child best. Some responses

focused on the need to improve terms and conditions for foster carers, as well as bringing greater consistency to the training and support foster carers receive, to aid recruitment and retention challenges.

*“Every Local Authority and IFA's have different policies, different training, different remunerations, different terms and conditions, different disruption meeting policies - the list goes on. It is vital that this is addressed in this Review”*

**Respondent - foster carer**

*You don't appear to have linked improving the foster carer's role, terms and conditions, remuneration, training and so on with the positive impact that would have on recruitment. Any profession or organisation that is serious about recruitment understands the power of advocacy. By improving the "lot" of the foster carer, there would be a positive impact on recruitment”.*

**Respondent - foster carer**

*More focus on retention of foster carers rather than recruitment. Changing the status of foster carers from contractors with “gig economy” rights to local authority employees would significantly improve retention.*

**Respondent - foster carer**

We also received responses which referenced the cost and commissioning of foster care placements, which tended to draw out comparisons between Independent Fostering Agencies and local authorities. Some respondents questioned whether advertising foster care as a paid task commodified children in care - and some questioned how ‘best value’ is determined by local authorities when deciding whether to place a child with an IFA or local authority foster carer. Some of the large IFA Groups (e.g. NAFP) questioned whether local authorities' own in-house foster carers were ever ‘best value’ and that they thought the review should dig deeper into LAs' costs for in-house provision. On both sides of this debate, there was some consensus that *“cheapest first’ should not be the basis for choosing care for children”*.

Comments received about residential care tended to focus on concerns around profit being made from the running of residential care homes, and the involvement of private finance in the sector.

Many respondents disagreed with the government's decision to not extend the ban on semi-independent accommodation to 16-18 year olds and to instead introduce national standards to regulate these settings. Respondents were critical of the review for not supporting a ban on semi-independent provision for this age group.

*“We do not recognise the need for any distinction whatsoever between the care offered to young people before and after one's 16th birthday. No good parent would*

*countenance such a distinction. Young people making the transition from childhood to adulthood need proper care and support at all times. Standards for 16-18 accommodation should be as high as those for under 16's and must include the provision of care.*

**The Care Leavers Association**

*We remain bitterly disappointed that the review has supported the government's very regressive change to legislation which only requires that children in care aged 15 and younger live in settings where they receive day-to-day care. This is a very positive development for this group of children (fewer than 100 children this age are currently not living in care settings) but it discriminates against 16 and 17 year-olds in care (several thousand children this age are living in settings where they receive no day-to-day care). It creates a two-tier care system and is the first time legislation has differentiated care planning and placement decision-making on the basis of age.*

**Article 39**

We acknowledge this is an area where there are strong feelings and legitimate concerns. We have said that focussing on how new standards for these homes can improve quality and ensuring that the option of semi-independent living is only used where it is in the best interests of children, is the fastest route to improve the urgent situation for young people in the system now. We will continue to speak to young people ahead of the review's final recommendations about this issue and to listen to views before coming to a broader position on care options for children.

Finally, a number of comments referred to a care 'cliff edge' for young people when they reached age 18, with calls for a more consistent offer to be made available across Local Authority areas.

*"A national offer for care leavers aged 18-25, taking away the current postcode lottery. This offer should include a health offer (including dental, optical and prescription costs), dedicated mental health support, Digital Data provision, Universal credit at the over 25 rate and free transport. Post 25 there needs to be national/regional provision including priority mental health care and quality advice and support around accommodation and other needs – for care experienced people to access as needed."*

**National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum**

*"Care" shouldn't end at 18. It feels like such a horrible way to end a Young Person's Childhood.*

**Solent Youth Services**

How can care help to build loving lifelong relationships as the norm?

Responses to this question unequivocally agreed that loving, stable relationships are of paramount importance to children in care. Responses focussed on the importance of maintaining local homes and local connections - and included similar responses to previous questions about the importance of keeping brothers and sisters together. Some responses suggested prioritising kinship care and shared care as an option for more children who cannot remain with their birth parents.

*When children are not able to stay within the care of their parents looking to kinship care, local foster care and small group residential care (may be as shared care with parents) so that there is continuation of children's local friendships and schooling...It needs to be recognised that (extended) families are more likely to be a source of continuing commitment to children into adulthood. And acknowledged it is not possible to legislate for 'love' but it is possible to promote continuing care.*

**Unison**

There were suggestions offered about ways the review could improve decision making around care placements, which usually stemmed from a view that the needs and preferences of the child need to be given more weight in the decisions Local Authorities make about the places children live. The importance of being able to offer children stable environments to live in was also a common theme - with many respondents questioning how loving lifelong relationships can be formed when many children face regular changes of foster placement, residential home or social worker.

*Ask children who is important to them. Start there.*

**Respondent - foster carer**

*Identity, culture, age, background needs to be considered when placing children and young people.*

**SASH**

We also received a number of responses from foster carers as well as the Association of Directors of Children's Services and others, who expressed a desire to maintain longer term relationships with the children in their care, and that models of shared care should be considered more often.

*"a more flexible system of care is needed, one that is less binary and allows for more permeable boundaries between home and a safe setting. A system that also supports birth families, backed by some form of legal status to allow for such 'part-time' or shared care arrangements; such a model has been widely used to support children with disabilities and their families."*

**Association of Directors of Children's Services**

What changes do we need to make to ensure we have the right homes in the right places with the right support? What should the role of residential care be in future?

The responses we received to this question generally supported the view that there are too few homes in the right places, which offer the right type of support. A number of responses focussed on the need for more specialist accommodation to be made available to different cohorts of children with complex needs.

*“For disabled children with severe and complex difficulties residential care should be small and on a family model. Much more investment needed in support for families e.g. extensions, 24hr care in the home.”* **Respondent - professional**

Responses also focussed on the commissioning, oversight and accountability of residential care, including how the quality of residential care could be improved through alternative inspection and monitoring arrangements.

*“All units should be regulated by Ofsted/CQC- this should apply to all units, regardless of child's age. This will prevent units that are inadequate from operating and placing children at risk of further harm.”*

**Respondent - NHS Trust**

*“Ensure that LA's are responsible for their own needs for residential care. Remove for profit homes.”*

**Respondent - professional**

*“The DfE and DHSC and Home Office need to take more responsibility for commissioning specialist placements for those with the most complex and acute needs linked to mental health, criminal behaviour, learning difficulties and very high risk behaviours.”*

**Respondent - Local Authority**

Responses also focussed on housing for care leavers, and the accommodation available to young people at age 18. Some of these responses pointed out that out of area placements mean some 18 year olds are required to return to the local authority area they originally came from - which made finding suitable housing and support particularly challenging.

*“There needs to be a national priority offer for care leavers around accommodation – whether they are living in the borough they came from or not. Each leaving care team should not have to negotiate with multiple housing providers or districts (in the case of 2-tier LAs) to secure this. We would like to see the ‘Guarantor Scheme’ being available nationally”.*

**National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum**

Finally, some responses commented on the support young people receive before moving into a residential home or foster care placement, which included giving children and young people a say over the place and people they live with.

## What did we miss or misunderstand in Chapter Four?

As well as our vision for care, relationships and homes, Chapter Four covered a wide ranging set of issues facing children in care including mental health support, education, support for care leavers and the stigma facing care experienced people.

One area that respondents felt that the Case for Change was missing was the importance of children's rights, independent advocacy and listening to the views of children and young people in all decisions which affect them.

*“Systems and structures are necessary to ensure that children’s views and experiences are known, understood and acted on throughout all of their time in care, and in wider policy and practice development. There is very little in The Case for Change about the importance of listening to children and young people, and the necessity of cultural change which consistently affirms children as people with their own feelings, needs and rights”.*

### **Article 39**

We are unequivocal in our support for the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child, but are also clear that on its own it will not be enough to ensure that all children grow up in loving, stable, safe homes - for this we need to go beyond rights and into the relationships that children need in their lives.

Respondents also mentioned:

- The link between homelessness and care and the view that some local authorities are inappropriately using section 17 to deal with homeless young people who should be looked after
- That there should be more consideration of the use of restraint for children in the youth justice system
- The specific needs of looked after children in the care system with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Provision of timely and suitable accommodation for children who are released from custody.



## Chapter Five: System factors

How can we strengthen multi-agency join up both locally and nationally, without losing accountability?

Responses to this question generally agreed that effective multi-agency join up was incredibly difficult to achieve in the current system. Many respondents raised the national context, including complex legal structures and differing inspection frameworks. There was a general feeling that there was not a cross agency approach from central government and this impacted local working.

*“Ultimately, there needs to be shared accountability as established in the safeguarding partnerships already at ministerial, departmental, and local levels. The regulatory structures should also be conjoined to enable system wide appraisals of the way that the public services improve the lives of those children of concern that does not isolate agencies for blame, but points to systems for learning and improved outcomes. Lastly, there needs to be developed a shared language for all partners that is jargon free and talks only in terms of the benefit to children of actions and omissions.”*

### **National Network of Designated Healthcare Professionals for Children**

*“Government’s response to the Panel’s National Reviews and recommendations has demonstrated some of the lack of national ‘join up’ in addressing children’s needs. Our experience is that a response and resulting action takes too long and that there is not a sufficiently senior cross-government group that can assume ownership of them. When there is compelling evidence and clear recommendations for guidance, advice or further development it is imperative that action is taken to support safeguarding partnerships improve their safeguarding arrangements.”*

### **National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel**

A significant number of respondents felt multi-disciplinary teams were the most effective way to get a joined up response for families.

*I think we need to set up teams with all disciplines that can work together across budgets and resources. Some teams could also be given specific remits. For example they could look at working with domestic violence to change the pattern - working with the perpetrator as well as the victims, and therapeutically with the children - children could be removed in the short term but returned once the work had been undertaken.*

### **Respondent - children's social workforce**

Many respondents felt that the approach to multi-agency working locally could be bureaucratic and overly reliant on the use of meetings that were not sufficiently purposeful. A number of respondents felt shared IT systems and other means of sharing information should be explored.

*"The way partners work with one another is one dimensional and bureaucratic. Take for example a child in need meeting or a core group, they are often formulaic where each professional takes it in turn to offer their update. I often found these meetings indicative of the lack of creativity in how agencies work together."*

### **Respondent - education workforce**

*"The immediate members of our family went to a multi disciplinary meeting where everyone was asked to compare notes to decide what level or vulnerability our teen had. It was very high. That was agreed and then the meeting was finished. No actions to follow up despite our teen living with a friend who was not able to provide basic safeguarding. The meeting basically was a meeting to arrange the date of another meeting whilst as a family we were helpless to do anything."*

### **Respondent - personal experience of children's social care**

Budgets were raised frequently as a barrier to collaboration, with some respondents suggesting pooled budgets as a way of improving matters.

*"A key barrier to good quality multi-agency working is funding. Due to budget pressures across the whole public sector, agencies are forced to be protective about their own funding. One area that needs more exploration is the potential of pooled budgets across agencies and how this could engender good quality multi-agency working."*

### **East of England Education and Children's Services Lead Members Network**

Other points made by respondents when responding to this question included:

- That there is often poor collective understanding of thresholds locally, with respondents in children's social care feeling that partners referred inappropriately and partners feeling that children's social care was not accepting legitimate referrals
- That multi-agency working is highly dependent on good relationships and professionals and that high workforce turnover makes working much harder
- That differing local footprints across police and health made it more difficult to work collaboratively

- Some respondents thought schools should be more involved in the new safeguarding arrangements
- That it is vital the voice of children and families are not lost in multi-agency working
- Specific challenges in providing support to children with SEND
- Transitions to adulthood as a particularly challenging area due to differing ages at which children move between services

## How do we free up social workers to spend more time in direct practice with children and families and reduce risk aversion?

Respondents generally acknowledged that the balance of time currently spent on direct work and other activities is not optimal and more time should be spent with children and families by social workers. Many respondents commented that a significant organisational and administrative change in the children's social care system is required to address this balance. Respondents frequently pointed to the need for high quality leadership across the system to create a supportive, reflective and less risk averse culture.

*“Less focus on audits and reviews. There is never going to be a perfect system, but a system that works and is focussed on the young people is the way forward. I know a lot of the stress and time comes from the amount of paperwork involved and it is not manageable at times. I would rather spend my time with my cases than completing the endless amounts of paperwork which you never feel up to date on due to the amount there is. That will not change unless something is done from the top.”*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

A number of respondents raised the role of inspection in driving additional work and risk aversion.

*“Inspections drive organisations even more towards bureaucracy and paperwork to 'evidence' that they are on top of things and the 'preparation' for inspection in terms of admin tasks for practitioners is ridiculous.”*

**Respondent - children's social care workforce**

*“Currently Ofsted still takes a stance that if it is not written down, it didn't happen.”*

**Respondent - local authority**

Other points made by respondents when responding to this question included:

- That some of the activity social workers complete that does not involve direct practice can often be necessary and valuable - for example keeping accurate records.
- The role of business support and administrative staff in taking burdens away from social workers

- The fact that social workers are often having to repeat themselves and duplicate processes, inputting into multiple different forms
- That there is scope for much better use of technology to reduce burdens on social, with COVID showing the options to reduce travel and make better use of virtual meetings
- That risk is inherent in children's social work and social workers need to have confidence and knowledge to effectively assess and hold this risk rather than try to eliminate it.
- That high profile media stories can lead to social workers not wanting to take and hold risk.
- That social workers should be accessible by having welcoming spaces where they can meet families.

## How can monitoring and inspection make the most difference to families' experiences and engender greater freedom and responsibility in the workforce?

Several respondents, including the Local Government Association and Ofsted, suggested that Ofsted's current ILACS inspection regime is an improvement on previous monitoring arrangements. Other respondents still felt that there was more to do to make sure that inspection truly takes into account the experiences of children and families, rather than focusing on compliance - and that what is observed by Ofsted is not necessarily representative of practice.

*"The experiences and progress of children are explicitly at the heart of our major social care inspection frameworks (ILACS and the SCCIF), which were developed in close consultation with stakeholders across the sector. As such, they are built on a consensus of what children and families should expect from children's social care and how inspections can best provide reassurance to all key stakeholders, including children and families. We have worked hard to move away from compliance-based or over-prescriptive inspections. The feedback we receive indicates that we largely get this right. But we will continue to listen to all feedback and do all we can to work consistently, and in a way that drives improvement and in the best interests of children and families".*

### **Ofsted**

*"While the introduction of the ILACS framework has been well received by councils and the inspectorate remains committed to working with councils to improve support for children, it remains the case that the inspection regime drives a degree of risk aversion within many children's services departments."*

### **Local Government Association**

*“Spend the majority of the inspection talking to families rather than auditing files. This shift would mean people focus on what matters - the service user relationship and experience rather than making a file look tidy.”*

**Respondent - children’s social care workforce**

*“Various innovations in the State involving looked after children and care leavers in inspection teams have been developed in recent decades, right back to the early 1990s. These should be revisited, with a view to providing a stable mechanism whereby looked after children and care leavers can be a central feature of future inspection and monitoring processes.”*

**Care Leavers Association**

Many respondents commented that local interpretations of the Ofsted inspection regime, as well as the attitude of local leadership, made a difference to the impact of inspection. Many of these respondents suggested that cultural change is needed, so managers are confident for inspectors to see everyday social work practice, rather than a pre-prepared, idealised version. Ofsted also agreed that inspections can have unintended impacts on practice:

*“Sometimes there is an over-reliance on Ofsted judgements as a single measure of success or quality”*

**Ofsted**

*“From what I have seen Ofsted tends to agree with the direction of travel needed i.e. the need to free up social workers to do their best work. So what is the disconnect? I continue to come across local authorities where the highest context and predominant influence is stats, fully up to date recording systems and overall, a bureaucratic masterpiece which will achieve the highest Ofsted rating.”*

**Respondent - education workforce**

Other points raised by respondents include:

- That the inspection regime for children’s homes needs to change to focus on providers rather than buildings
- That there was a need for inspections to take a more multi-agency approach - for instance more joint inspections
- As well as one-off inspection events, there is a role for ongoing monitoring to provide constructive criticism and support peer-led or sector-led improvement.
- A single national model of inspection doesn’t always take account of local needs and pressures.
- Some respondents expressed concern that the current oversight and monitoring system doesn’t provide sufficient oversight of social workers’ day to day practice, including opportunities to correct case notes which don’t accurately represent families’ experiences and views.

- Some respondents emphasised that it's important to consider why certain inspections and regulations were introduced and how a more streamlined system could safeguard against the risks they were designed to address.

## What will need to be different about this review's recommendations compared to previous reviews so that they create a tipping point for improvement?

Many respondents encouraged the review to come up with a small number of recommendations with clear proposals and a timetable of how they should be implemented. Respondents also stressed that the review will need to secure government and sector commitment to implement the review's recommendations, including through additional funding and any legislation needed.

*"The recommendations need clear actions behind them - an action plan that illustrates how the recommendations can be implemented - not just vague sentences but clear guidance to professionals and families as to how to implement the change we need."*

**Sheffield Young Carers**

*"The reviews recommendations need to be balanced and realistic, there is a need to acknowledge that interactions between families, communities and organisations are fluid,"*

**Local authority**

Respondents also highlighted the importance of developing solutions together with children and families, who are the experts in their own experiences, as well as with the social workers and managers who will have to implement the review's recommendations.

*"More co-production and engagement with service users to inform what is working and what areas could be improved, at a local and national level, would help to inform and enable a 'bottom-up' approach to local issues within social care."*

**National Association for Special Educational Needs**

*"You need to let services and those using the service speak together and try to find solutions."*

**Respondent – voluntary sector workforce**

Other issues highlighted by respondents include:

- The review needs to generate widespread and high-profile support for its recommendations, across government, political parties and the social care sector.
- The review needs to make a strong, fully-costed case for sufficient resources to fund and implement any reforms.
- The review should think about reform from first principles rather than adding new policies and processes to the existing, complicated framework of legislation and policies.
- The review's final report needs to be followed by a long-term commitment and programme of support for the sector to ensure the recommendations are implemented.
- The review should aspire to improve the join-up between government departments and between national and local government, to amplify the voice of social care and make it simpler to implement the recommendations.
- The review should draw links with other ongoing reviews and systemic changes, eg the SEND review (to create a system that works in the round for children with disabilities and their families) and the introduction of Integrated Care Systems in the NHS.
- The review should consider what changes are needed to the training and recruitment of social workers who will work in and deliver reformed services.

## What did we miss or misunderstand in Chapter Five?

Alongside multi-agency working, time spent with families, inspection and the route to change, Chapter Five also discussed wider system issues in children's social care, including funding and recruitment and retention of the workforce.

The Case for Change makes clear that children's social care is under significant funding pressure and that there is no situation where we will not need to spend more in this area. We also discuss the significant pressure on other services such as housing, substance misuse services, mental health services and support for victims of domestic abuse and the impact of reduced spending on these services. However, some respondents felt that the review should discuss these issues in more detail. Many respondents were pleased that we raised the impact of numerous small and short term pots of funding and emphasised the importance of the review addressing this issue.

Some respondents have commented that our analysis of historic funding trends underplays the scale of local authority funding pressures, because we considered data from the 2012-13 fiscal year onwards. We chose the 2012-13 as the baseline for our historic funding analysis as data that exists pre 2012-13 is not fully comparable. Listening to the feedback on the Case for Change, we recognise that going back further would have shown greater pressure on local government spending power since 2010-11. Whilst looking back to 2010-11 would

have changed the numbers to reflect the 2009-10 peak in spending, our intention was to use the most robust data available, and we don't believe changing our baseline year would have altered the argument for additional funding that we already make.

Some respondents felt that the Case for Change was overly critical of local authorities and social workers. We are clear that in describing the problems in the system we are not criticising the many dedicated individuals who do an incredibly challenging job, but rather the systems within which they work. If we are going to achieve real change, we think it is important that we do not shy away from the genuine problems in the system that have been described to us in great detail by children and families.

Other points made by respondents about this chapter included:

- The impact of poor quality social work on children and families, especially when caused by inexperience or a lack of understanding.
- That the cost of care in a loving and supported family versus the cost of care in any other environment and the outcomes of all settings would be interesting analysis to include.
- The importance of reflective supervision for social workers and the impact of trauma on social workers.
- The importance of continuity in children's and families' relationships with social workers.
- The need to develop joint solutions with health, education and other services
- Post-qualification training and development for social workers, after their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.
- The importance of accountability of social workers to children and families, including the remedies available to children and families when things go wrong.
- Historical and institutional reasons for underinvestment in children's social care compared to other public services.
- The impact of Covid on social work practice and the needs of children and families.
- Transitions to adult services.
- Training, capacity, retention, and career opportunities for social care professionals who are not social workers (eg children's homes managers, personal advisors, early help staff)

## Annex: list of organisations that responded to the Case for Change



Action for Children  
Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS)  
ALL4U Fostering Ltd and The Layberry Foundation  
Article 39  
Association of Clinical Psychologists (ACP-UK)  
Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families  
Barnardos  
Birth Companions  
British Association of Social Workers  
British Psychological Society  
Care Leavers Association  
Care Review Watch Alliance  
Carers Trust  
Centre for Research on Children and Families, UEA  
Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel  
Children and Families Across Borders  
Children England  
Children's Services Development Group  
Complex Needs Coalition  
Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies  
Coram BAAF  
Coram Voice  
Disabled Children's Partnership  
Dudley Children's Social Care  
Dynamic Childcare Ltd  
East of England LGA  
ESS  
Family Action  
Frontline  
Gladstone Close Residents  
Greater Manchester Local Authority  
Hertfordshire County Council  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
Home for Good  
Homeless Link  
Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA)  
Inspire Scotland  
Isabel's Voice  
Just for Kids Law/Children's Rights Alliance for England  
Kent County Council  
King's College London  
Kinship Care Alliance  
Knowsley Council  
Lancashire South Cumbria NHS Trust

Legal Action for Women  
Leicestershire Cares  
Local Government Association  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Medway Council  
Moderator Consulting Ltd  
NAFP  
NAGALRO  
Nasen  
National Association of Independent Schools and Non-Maintained Schools (NASS)  
National Children's Bureau (NCB)  
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)  
National leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, Catch 22  
National Network of Designated Healthcare Professionals  
National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
National Working Group on Safeguarding Disabled Children  
National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)  
New Local  
North East Branch of the British Association of Social Workers  
North East ADCS  
North Lincolnshire Council Children's Services  
Northamptonshire Children's Trust  
Northumberland County Council  
Ofsted  
Outbound Permanence  
Parent Families and Allies Network (PFAN)  
Pause  
Portsmouth County Council  
Project 17  
Ratio  
Refugee and Migration Children's Consortium (RMCC)  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Safe Empowerment  
SASH  
Sefton Council/Sefton CVS  
Serenity Welfare  
Sheffield Young Carers  
Solent Youth Services Ltd  
South London and Maudsley NHS Trust  
South London Refugee Association  
South Sefton CCG and Southport and Formby CCG  
South West Education and Care

Square Peg and Not Fine in School  
Staffordshire Local Authority  
Surrey County Council  
Swindon Borough Council  
The Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers  
The Association of Lawyers of Children  
The Challenging Behaviour Foundation  
The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel  
The Children's Society  
The Fostering Network  
Together Trust  
Together for Short Lives  
Unison  
We Are Family  
West London Zone  
West Midlands Children's Services (West Midlands ADCS Network)  
West Yorkshire Police  
White Rose Commissioning Partnership  
Youth Justice Board