



# The independent review of children's social care



## Evidence Group Minutes & Actions Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 15:30 – 17:30

### Agenda

1. Minutes of last meeting
2. Case for change
3. Call for Evidence
4. Future analytical work of the review
5. Comms and public statements
6. AOB

### Attendees

Leon Feinstein, Evidence Group  
Dez Holmes, Evidence Group  
Geraldine Macdonald, Evidence Group  
Lisa Harker, Evidence Group  
Oliver Southwick, Evidence Group  
Eleanor Briggs, WWCS  
Donald Forrester, Evidence Group  
Paul Bywaters, Evidence Group  
Haroon Chowdry, Evidence Group  
John Simmonds, Evidence Group  
Janet Kay, EbyE & Evidence Group  
Josh MacAlister, Review Chair  
Duncun Dunlop  
Review team members

### Apologies

Karen Broadhurst, Evidence Group  
Chris Wild, EbyE & Evidence Group

Number	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
1	Review team to send call for evidence summary and group members to send any comments by 9 <sup>th</sup> June.	All	9 <sup>th</sup> June	Open
2	Review team to share new draft of early help definition and the group	All	19 <sup>TH</sup> May	Closed





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	should send back feedback if they wish.			
3	Review team to consider the parallels of the children's social care system with the adult social care system.	Review team	On-going	Open
4	Form a small sub-group that focuses on the call for evidence and provide peer review and challenge.	[Redact]	On-going	Open
5	Group members to get in touch with the review team if they wish to share thoughts or be involved in any future analytical work of the review. Group members should also share any thinking on how best to engage the research community.	All	On-going	Open
6	Review team to share a link to the workforce plan and group members should cascade this round to their networks if they wish.	All	19 <sup>th</sup> May	Closed
7	[Redact]/review team member to consider topics for discussions outside of the main evidence group (e.g. vision for CSC) and sub-groups	[Redact] & review team member	On-going	Open

## Outstanding actions

Number	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
5	To share any relevant international evidence with the Review Team.	Group Members	30 June 2021	Open
8	[Redact] to share examples of good practise.	[Redact]	26 May 2021	Open
10	Hold specific evidence hearings on 2 or 3 topics with external speakers and invite EbyE members along if they wish to attend.	Review Team	On-going	Open

### 1. Minutes of last meeting

No comments

### 2. Case for change





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Review team member – thanked the group for commenting on the CfC. We have also had comments from the EbyE Board and Design Group. We are hoping to send the call for evidence summary to you next week so that you have time to comment. We are asking for any comments by the 9<sup>th</sup> June. Publish the CfC with annexes which will be published in June and we will send a version before that. After this has been published we will seek feedback.

[Redact] – do you have a sense of how long the feedback phase will go on for after the CfC has been published?

Review team member – a couple of months to thoroughly get feedback

Josh – the questions you saw in the document will be used to get into discussions about the CfC. We are trying to open them up to a wider audience.

[Redact] – significant case for change in [Redact] which the government has now picked up. There are LAs which may also be subject to the same issues. How do we explain a LA is failing? Concerned that LAs do not come out well in the document. How do we conceptualize these issues?

[Redact] – that question is for a later part of the agenda, lets revisit

Josh – Lets not overread situations at an extreme, most of the situations are not like [Redact]. We are looking at both ends of the spectrum.

[Redact] – what happens to the timeline if the sector reject the CfC? E.g. they say your argument is wrong

Josh – The purpose of an early publication is to have that dialog of what is missing. There will be things we have missed or misunderstood and we invite challenge on this deliberately.

[Redact] – who is the audience?

Josh – government is the main because we want to persuade them to make change

[Redact] – can you say more about the feedback process so far on the CfC?

Review team member – we have spent time going through looking at substantive comments as this is what would need redrafting or amending the most. Then we have technical comments e.g on evidence references. We are turning it around quickly but doing it thoroughly

## Overview of substansive comments received by all groups

- Looking at frame and tone of working particularly on profession and workforce
- Case studies – look at how we are framing them so as not to appear as endorsements
- Include new chapter on intro which will look at outcomes for children and why change is needed. This will talk about previous reviews and why this one is dfferent.
- Evidence that we are revisiting
- Rewording questions we are asking





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- Chapt 1 – clear on wording on adversity, why demand has increased, reframe question on support and intervention
- Chapt 2 – reframing the decision making section so is not just focused on social worker decisions, redrafting teenager section, considering drafting on child protection court proceedings
- Chapt 3 – make it more child focused, EbyE has particularly focused on this chapter, they raised how we describe issues in the current system when parts are completely unfit e.g. it may suggest the review will only look at tweaking how things are done. Redrafting on care leavers.  
Chapt 4 – change wording on system factors, discuss Ofsted more, will add a few lines on evidence gaps and the need for better data, will add a subsection to address other reviews and why we are carrying out another review.

## Comments

[Redact] – safety, welfare, development and wellbeing is routed in their family life. If a child doesn't have a family for life, the risk factors is increase. We should unite ourselves with this issue.

[Redact] – why are we here? Thinking about the dynamic of conversations we have had over the years, there is an issue of stating a set of problems and leaping straight to conclusions. People feel powerless about issues they raise. The review needs to hold the space for us to consider these issues before we jump to solutions..

[Redact] – the issue of setting out a vision for children's social care. Should place the review in the context of wider government and the contradictions of policies and how they impact children and families. The way parents are written about and the consistency of this, it should not be binary (e.g. neglect vs serious harm, adversity vs abuse). The family help definition – not 100% happy with. Criticism that system is too beaurocratic, suspicion of a deregulation agenda, and concerns that data is included in that.

[Redact] – agree with everything [Redact] and [Redact] said. There are no challenges to government even though the audience is government for CfC? The challenge is not demonstrative of the amount of power they have and this was an issue in previous reviews. We may confuse symptoms with problems and jump to the wrong solutions – we should direct the lens a bit differently.

[Redact] – the role of evidence that is a voice of those with care expericence, people do not feel heard, those with care experience should be registered in the CfC. Previous reforms have not works as the are not accepted by those who have to implement them, the CfC should be recongised by the people who have to implement change.

[Redact] – make the case more that solving the children social care system could solve other issues in society. E.g. make the case to ministers how many issues change could solve. Shared [Redact] case study on the reduction of NEETs

Josh – thanked the group for comments. Key that we hold space to consider the questions posed in the document before rushing to answers. We want to ensure we have time to discuss possible solutions. We are redrafting early help definion, we recognise it is narrow. Tone and vision concerns are being addressed in the exec summary. We will do more on contradictory





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government policies and changing the tone to be more balanced. Ofsted shapes behaviour and incentives and we are adding more on inspection.

[Redact] \_– would like to see early help new definition. We should flag that the big question for the review is broad, the vision for the CSC system should also be a question for the review.

Josh – wont be the final version but share new definition of family help today so you have a few days to comment. We might run workshops on this question. Agreed to include a question on the vision for CSC in the CfC.

[Redact] – we should discuss what the purpose of the service is. A rights based way of looking at CSC is helpful, however, anything that promotes just childrens rights could be an interventionist approach. We should consider and respect the parents rights, therefore is about balancing rights.

[Redact] – [Redact] point about rights is an interesting one. Adult social care is much sharper and we should discuss risk vs rights and how the state should be intervening, should consider what read across there is.

Josh – not spoken to the Adult's Social Care review yet, take away the parallels with adult social care

[Redact] \_ - I think proportionality is a really key concept - and one workers and managers also appreciate and find helpful

[Redact] - lets not polarise childrens rights. Child protection plans expect families to make huge changes with limited support from the system. Why do we have a revolving door of families involved in the system?

[Redact] – question of what is the system? We should have this conversation outside of the meeting.

Josh – why have other review's not led to the scale of change we would want?

[Redact] - can anyone name a big government review that has achieved what it set out to do? Could we ask government this?

[Redact] \_– Children Act 89, this radicalised our view and set out the role of the state when intervening in children and family lives. Legislation could demonstrate this but it has become flakey. The law may be robust but does it create for opportunity and good welfare for children?

[Redact] \_– there is something about timing (e.g. new governments coming into power, Baby P). Blindspots in the Munro review. Jump from hypothesised problems to solutions

[Redact] \_– lets be realistic about outcomes, how much can really change? Government should set out what a review should do, need to create a learning system

[Redact] – what is needed to bring about change? One of the reasons the Munro review didn't deliver. Implementation science is important to consider.

[Redact] \_– is the review able to see the evidence behind Munro's assumptions that people have enforced her reform recommendations?

[Redact] – be clear on what we are trying to achieve and not over prescribing

[Redact] \_– we should look at the politics now not history





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[Redact] – Ministers may be risk adverse. It really depends on how much we can influence government.

[Redact] – hearts and minds is key. You don't help a person change by telling them they are bad. We should make people feel empowered to feel positive about change.

Review team member – systems thinking, we have had initial conversations with what we can learn from Munro. Have also had conversations with the UK Implementation Society on frameworks because we don't want to leave implementation thinking until the end. We can have further conversations on some of these issues e.g. how we engage next.

[Redact] – we should think about sub-groups and pick up over email.

[Redact] – would like to hear more about how we provide more agency to families. We never hear what happens to what we contribute or feedback on. See more studies on birth parents being able to feedback who are on the receiving end of services.

[Redact] – raise fundamental issue that legal obligations are not being picked up.

[Redact] – resources are not there to pick up the support needs

Josh - There are so many legal duties and obligations not reflected in what happens on the ground. Very important for us when thinking about recommendations- new guidance isn't the same as action.

[Redact] - I do think the biggest single improvement we could make in children's social care and family justice is to give the children and families who experience it more agency (it's a prerequisite for any 'system' to work)

[Redact] - Happy to engage on Josh's questions on poverty and adversity and the numbers outside this meeting.

Review team member – making rapid changes this week, if there anything we have not discussed on big changes please email us asap. We may come to specific people in the next few days on feedback they have given to discuss possible redrafting.

### 3. Call for Evidence

Review team member – closed on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, aimed at researchers.. It has fed into different chapters. Will send CfE annex to the group for comments next week. The CfE has provided a wide body of evidence, considering how else the CfE can feed into the wider review. Asked for a small group to focus on call for evidence and act as challenge and peer review ( [Redact], [Redact] and [Redact] happy to help)

### 4. Future analytical work of the review

Review team member – shared slide on future analytical work including research roundtables, systems thinking work, and cost-benefit work. Asked if any members would like to help the team to consider how best to engage the research community and/or cost-benefit work ([Redact] happy to help on CBA work, [Redact] happy to help in general). We will send initial thinking on roundtables, systems thinking and CBA work.





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[Redact] \_– don't comment on commissions if thinking about bidding. Can comment on future work and plans if wish to but not obligatory.

[Redact] \_– NICE review has set out wide body of evidence supporting it's guidelines – how does this link in to this review? What is experience of using the guidance and it's use to the sector?

[Redact] – NICE guidelines may have little impact on children's social care

## 5. Comms and public statements

[Redact] – will be doing a blog about the group but will share with the group. If people want to write things lets do it in the spirit of sharing.

Josh – we have review team member who can support the group on communications.

[Redact] – this is a confidential discussion but a safe space to contribute your thoughts

## 6. AOB

Review team member - Workforce engagement plan has been launched, we will share this round in case you want to share it to your colleagues

