

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Cc – Bridget Phillipson MP, Shadow Secretary of state for Education
Cc- Helen Hayes MP, Shadow Minister for Children and Early Years

5th May 2022

Dear Sir Keir,

Children's social care in England is not delivering for our most vulnerable children and young people and it needs long-term solutions that allow local authorities and other partners the certainty they need to support a child through their entire childhood and into adulthood.

As a group of organisations who work with and represent the interests of care-experienced children we have today written to the Secretary of State for Education in advance of the imminent publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care led by Josh MacAlister. In our letter we have outlined three ways in which we believe the Government could demonstrate its commitment to the review.

Firstly, we want to see Government commitment to a timetable for reform that is transparent, ambitious and underscores the urgency needed to improve children's social care.

Secondly it must deliver investment. Children's social care cannot be transformed without significant and long-term investment in local authorities and their partners.

Finally, we would like the Government to commit to a mechanism that ensures that the voices of care-experienced children and adults remain at the centre of these reforms. Those with care-experience should have ways to hold the Government to account for these reforms and their voices should be heard by those making decisions about how reform should be implemented.

We write to you to share our thoughts and to ask you for the Labour Party's support in the coming months to make sure that this reform of children's social care is the very best it can be.

It is our hope that the review will form the foundation stone of future reform to children's social care. We do not say this with the expectation that the review will be perfect. Indeed, we stand ready to challenge the Review and the Government, where necessary. It is our hope however, that the review can provide a long-term blueprint for a children's social care system that delivers for children and young people and which we can all be proud of.

We want to work with both Houses of Parliament to ensure that the best parts of the review are strengthened, any negative impacts are minimised, and that reform is long-term, sustainable, and is in the best interests of children and young people.

We would be keen to meet with the Labour Party soon after the Review reports to discuss the recommendations, explore what the Review might mean for any future Labour Government and to consider how best to work together to make the upcoming reforms the very best they can be in Parliament.

Yours Sincerely

Katharine Sacks-Jones, Chief Executive of Become

Alison Woodhead, Director of Public Affairs and Communications, Adoption UK

Lynn Perry, MBE, CEO, Barnardo's

Hannah McCowen, National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Manager, Catch22

Kathy Evans, Chief Executive, Children England

Louise King, Director, Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)

Dr Carol Homden CBE, Chief Executive, Coram Group (Coram, CoramVoice, CoramBAAF)

Anton Babey, CEO of Drive Forward Foundation

Cathy Ashley, Chief Executive, Family Rights Group

Louisa McGeehan, CEO, Just for Kids Law

Dr Lucy Peake, Chief Executive, Kinship

Claire Russell, Communications and Policy Manager, Leap Confronting Conflict

Anna Feuchtwang, CEO, National Children's Bureau

Felicity Dunworth and Arron Pile, Co-Chairs, and Patricia Ambrose, Director, National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL)

Anna Edmundson, Head of Policy & Public Affairs, NSPCC

Rita Waters, Group Chief Executive, NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

Rachael Henry, Head of Advocacy and Influencing, The Children's Society

Kevin Williams, Chief Executive, The Fostering Network

Mark Lee, Chief Executive, Together Trust

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