



Children's Social Care - National Implementation Board

Minutes of meeting held on 09 March 2023, 10:30-12:00.

Minister's Boardroom, and virtually via MS Teams.

Attendees

- Claire Coutinho MP- Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing. **Chair.**
- Amanda Spielman - His Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted
- Angela Frazer-Wicks - birth parent/parent, Chair of Trustees of Family Rights Group
- Anne-Marie Connelly – care leaver, working within participation at Action for Children
- Sir Anthony Finkelstein CBE, FREng - President of City, University of London.
Computer Scientist
- Isabelle Trowler - Chief Social Worker for Children and Families for England
- Janet Kay - adopter and kinship carer
- Jill Colbert OBE - Chief Executive of Together for Children and Director for Children's Services in Sunderland
- Dame Rachel De Souza DBE - England's Children's Commissioner
- Steve Crocker OBE - President of the Association for Directors of Children's Services
- Tom Riordan CBE - Chief Executive of Leeds City Council

Officials in Attendance

- Indra Morris - Director-General of Families Group and Senior Responsible Officer of Children's Social Care Reform Programme
- Hannah Smith - Head of Children's Social Care Strategy, DfE
- Emma Blagg - Head of Reform Implementation and Funding, DfE

Item 1: Update on Strategy Publication

1. The Board discussed reception to the publication of *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, the implementation strategy for children's social care reform. They noted that:
 - People were broadly positive about the overall policy direction.
 - There was some challenge around the pace of agency reforms, funding, and commitment to care experience as a protected characteristic.
 - Local authorities want more information about how they can get involved.

Item 2: Delivery Update

2. The Department was pleased to be in a position on 2nd February to respond so comprehensively to all three reviews published last year (the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, the National Review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson and the Competition and Markets Authority study into Children's Social Care Placements) through the publication of *Stable Homes Built on Love*, backed by an additional £200m funding in support of these reforms.
3. Members were updated on the progress of the programmes delivering the commitments in *Stable Homes, Built on Love*.
4. The Board agreed to continue assessing delivery challenges and risks, receiving regular updates on progress from the Department. They also agreed to discuss, at a future meeting, ideas for dissemination from learning from reform.
5. The Board discussed prioritisation of reforms, local authority funding and capacity for delivery, messaging around reforms and engaging stakeholders, and alignment of priorities across government.
6. The Board emphasised the need for pace on reforms to Family Help, given cost of living pressures. It was emphasised that there are lots of families and children in need of help right now.
7. Members noted positive measures to improve support for Kinship Carers, but challenged whether there was more that could be done to ensure we reduced the number of carers lacking sufficient support.
8. Members also highlighted that children with complex needs, and those subject to Deprivation of Liberty Orders, often encounter provision that is not meeting their needs, and this should be a focus for reform.
9. The Board agreed that care leavers should have a platform to share their views on the *Stable Homes, Built on Love* reform programmes.

Item 3: Board Member Engagement

10. Members agreed to continue their engagement with a range of programmes, based on their individual expertise and areas of interest.
11. The Board recognised that any 'task and finish' groups, set up to tackle specific questions or issues as part of the reform programme, should be outcome focussed, with clear end points.

