



Department  
for Education

# **Stable Homes, Built on Love:** **Implementation Strategy and Consultation**

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, we published **Stable Homes, Built on Love** – an implementation strategy and consultation, backed by £200m additional investment.

The strategy sets out a vision to rebalance children’s social care away from costly crisis intervention to more meaningful and effective early support.

It sets out actions that seek to:

- Address urgent issues facing children and families now
- Lay the foundations for whole system reform
- Set national direction for change

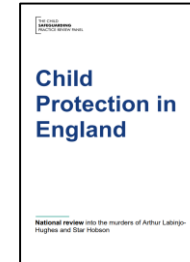
We will reform in phases, investing **£200m** over the next two years.

After two years we will refresh this strategy, **scaling up new approaches** we have tested and **bringing forward legislation** (subject to parliamentary time).

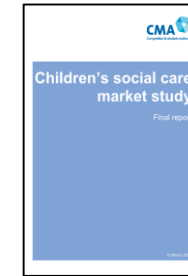
Three reviews were published last year, provided impetus and vision to transform children’s social care.



The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care



National Review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson



The Competition and Markets Authority study into Children’s Social Care Placements

### There are six pillars of reform



**Pillar 1: Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families**



**Pillar 2: A decisive multi-agency child protection system**



**Pillar 3: Unlocking the potential of family networks**



**Pillar 4: Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care**



**Pillar 5: A valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child who needs one**



**Pillar 6: A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data**

# Across the six pillars we are taking ambitious action over the next two years



## **Pillar 1: Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families**

- Consult on enabling a wider range of professionals to hold cases, alongside a Knowledge and Skills statement for Family Help Workers.
- Law Commission review of disability legislation



## **Pillar 2: A decisive multi-agency child protection system**

- Consult on new National Multi-Agency Child Protection Standards as part of 2023 update to Working Together
- Test and introduce new pathways to protect children from harms outside of the home.
- Set clearer roles and responsibilities for Safeguarding Partners and increase the role of education



## **Pillar 3: Unlocking the potential of family networks**

- £9 million to provide training and support to kinship carers
- Commitment to National Kinship Care Strategy by end of 2023



## **Pillar 4: Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care**

- Over £27 million for a foster care recruitment and retention programme
- Introduce a financial oversight regime and develop a programme to support children's home sector
- Over £30 million to expand Family Finding programmes including Lifelong Links.
- Strengthen and extend corporate parenting responsibilities to a wider range of public bodies



## **Pillar 5: A valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child who needs one**

- Five year Early Career Framework to support social workers at the start of their careers
- Support the recruitment of up to 500 additional child and family social work apprentices
- Consultation on National Rules on use of agency social workers



## **Pillar 6: A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data**

- Introduce National Children's Social Care Framework, data dashboard and Practice Guides
- Long term strategy for transforming use of data by end 2023
- Improve evidence base for what works to support persistently "Requires Improvement" Authorities

### **Families First for Children Pathfinder**

£45m to test key elements of Family Help, child protection and kinship reforms in up to 12 areas.

- Family help – a single intensive multi-disciplinary support service based in local communities. Supported by simplified funding arrangements.
- Child protection – Expert child protection lead practitioner role and multi-agency operating model
- Family networks – Family Group Decision Making offered as standard alongside Family Network Support packages

### **Regional Care Cooperatives Pathfinder**

Work across local authorities, health justice and third sector to co-design a regional approach to providing care in two areas.

## We are running three separate consultations as part of the strategy

Running for 14 weeks from 2<sup>nd</sup> February to 11<sup>th</sup> May

Consultation	Aims	Ways of engaging	Next steps
<b>Stable Homes, Built on Love</b>	<p><b>A consultation on the contents of the strategy.</b> We are consulting on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support and protection for children and families</li> <li>• support for kinship carers, and wider family networks</li> <li>• reforms to the experience of being in care, including corporate parenting</li> <li>• support for the workforce</li> <li>• delivery and system reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Online consultation page</li> <li>▪ A range of open events for members of the public (webinars)</li> <li>▪ Targeted events for key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ A range of in-person regional events/roadshows to help bolster a country-wide response to the plans.</li> </ul>	Government response September 2023
<b>Children’s Social Care National Framework for and Dashboard</b>	<p><b>A consultation inviting views on the National Framework.</b> Specifically looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the outcomes for children’s social care set out in the National Framework</li> <li>• the indicators in the data Dashboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Online consultation page</li> <li>▪ General events covering all NF content, organised by audience and location</li> <li>▪ Roundtables organised by experience and expertise</li> <li>▪ Utilising existing stakeholder engagement opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Government response September 2023</p> <p>Issue the National Framework as statutory guidance by the end of the year</p>
<b>Agency social workers</b>	<p><b>A consultation inviting views on a set of national rules on the engagement of agency social work resource, in order to provide more stable relationships for children and families and reduce cost.</b> Specifically looking at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• price caps on what local authorities may pay for an agency social worker</li> <li>• Post-qualified experience needed for an agency assignment</li> <li>• Use of project teams</li> <li>• References, notice periods, and movement between agency and substantive roles</li> <li>• Collection and sharing of pay and agency data</li> <li>• Adherence of procurement routes with the national rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Online consultation page</li> <li>▪ Communicating the consultation widely via sector networks</li> <li>▪ Targeted events led by the policy team and focused on the agency consultation proposals that are detailed and technical</li> </ul>	<p>Government response September 2023</p> <p>Publish national rules for agency use September 2023. Subject to consultation views, national rules in place Spring 2024.</p>

# Key milestones in phase one of our reform programme

Latest point this Parliament could end (17 December 2024)

End of this Spending Review period (March 2025)

	2023	2024	2025
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## Addressing urgent issues

<b>Increasing the recruitment and retention of foster carers</b>	North East hub established to support prospective foster carers (summer 2023) ◇	North East fostering recruitment marketing launch (autumn 2023) ◇ Regions for wider roll out selected (autumn 2023) ◇	Support offer and marketing campaigns launch in new areas (summer 2024) ◇
<b>Improving the training and support offer to kinship carers</b>		Delivery partner contract awarded (autumn 2023) ◇	Delivery commences (spring 2024) ◇
<b>Improving access to family finding</b>	Launch bidding round for new funding (spring 2023) ◇	Award funding (summer 2023) ◇	
<b>Uplifting the leaving care allowance</b>	Increased the allowance available to £3,000 (April 2023) ◇		
<b>Addressing the use of agency social workers</b>		Publish national rules for agency use (September 2023) ◇	National rules in place (spring 2024) ◇

## Setting national direction

<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	Consultation begins (February 2023) ◇	Government response (September 2023) ◇	
<b>Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard</b>	Consultation begins (February 2023) ◇	Government response (September 2023) ◇	Issue National Framework as statutory guidance (by the end of 2023) ◇
<b>Social worker workforce: proposed reforms to the agency market</b>	Consultation begins (February 2023) ◇	Government response (September 2023) ◇	
<b>Working Together Statutory Guidance</b>	Consultation begins (planned to launch in spring 2023) ◇	Issue updated guidance (by the end of 2023) ◇	Start annual updates of Working Together (2024) →
<b>Information Sharing Guidance</b>	Consultation begins (planned to launch in spring 2023) ◇	Issue updated guidance (by the end of 2023) ◇	
<b>Social worker workforce: Early Career Framework</b>		Consultation, as necessary, from autumn 2023 ◇	
<b>Proposals for legislative reform</b>		Consultation, as necessary, in autumn 2023 ◇	
<b>Practice Guides for leaders and practitioners</b>		Develop and design Practice Guides (2023/24) →	Disseminate Practice Guides (2024/25) →
<b>Key publications and reports</b>	Report to Parliament on information sharing and Consistent Child Identifier (summer 2023) ◇	Data Strategy (by the end of 2023) ◇ National Kinship Care Strategy (by the end of 2023) ◇	Knowledge and Skills Statement for Family Help Workers (summer 2024) ◇

## Laying the groundwork for future reforms

<b>The Families First for Children Pathfinder</b>		Wave 1 begins (September 2023) ◇	Wave 2 (2024) ◇
<b>Family Networks pilot</b>		Wave 1 begins (from summer 2023) ◇	Wave 2 (2024) ◇
<b>Regional Care Cooperatives</b>			Pathfinders (spring 2024) ◇
<b>Early Career Framework</b>	Early adopter launch (spring 2023) ◇		

## The key documents and consultations

### Stable Homes Built on Love: Implementation Strategy and Consultation

**Strategy:** [Children's social care: Stable Homes, Built on Love - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love)

**Online consultation page:** [Children's social care strategy: Stable Homes, Built on Love - Department for Education - Citizen Space](https://www.education.gov.uk/citizen-space/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love)

### Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard Consultation

**Online consultation page:** [Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard - Department for Education - Citizen Space](https://www.education.gov.uk/citizen-space/childrens-social-care-national-framework-and-dashboard)

### Agency Social Worker Consultation

**Online consultation page:** [Child and Family Social Worker Workforce - Department for Education - Citizen Space](https://www.education.gov.uk/citizen-space/child-and-family-social-worker-workforce)



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