

DfE Changes – Update February 2018 – March 2018

Consultation outcome on Eligibility for free school meals and the early years pupil premium under Universal Credit

1. The DfE has published the outcome of a recent consultation on eligibility for free school meals and the early years pupil premium under Universal Credit. The consultation proposed to introduce an annual net earnings threshold of £7,400, which would typically equate to an overall household income of between £18,000 and £24,000 once benefits income is taken into account. Protection was also proposed for those families who would otherwise have lost eligibility because of this change, and those who become eligible during the rollout of Universal Credit.
2. The government response to the consultation on free early years entitlement for 2 year olds under Universal Credit has been included as part of the response to this consultation. The 2 year old [consultation](#) proposed an annual net earnings threshold of £15,400, which would typically equate to an income of between £24,000 and £32,000 once benefits income is taken into account.
3. The government response has been to take forward the proposed new criteria for free school meals, the early years pupil premium, and the free early years entitlement for 2 year olds, laying regulations in parliament that will bring the proposed thresholds into force in April 2018.
4. The full government response which consolidates both consultations can be found [here](#).
Specific guidance about free school meals and transitional protection arrangements for them under Universal Credit can be found [here](#).

Review of school exclusions

5. The DfE's social mobility [action plan](#), which came out at the end of last year, included details of an externally-led review of exclusions. It has been confirmed that Edward Timpson, the former Minister for Children and Families, will lead this review, the terms of reference of which can be found [here](#).
6. A call for evidence has been launched and will remain open until 6 May 2018. This does not contain any specific proposals at this early stage of the review. Full details can be found [here](#).

Alternative provision

7. This policy paper sets out the government's vision for alternative provision (AP) and outlines reforms to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children in AP. The paper can be accessed [here](#).
8. The government has also introduced an Alternative Provision Innovation Fund - a £4 million grant funding programme launched to support innovative practices that aims to deliver better outcomes for children in alternative provision. Details of the fund can be found [here](#).

Academies Update

9. Number in Wiltshire at the end of March 2018:

Sponsored academies	22
Non-sponsored converter academies	69

10. New academies in this period:

Larkhill Primary School
Great Wishford CofE Primary School

Review of post-18 education

11. The Prime Minister has pledged to look at ways to ensure more people have a genuine choice of high quality technical and academic options. The review's terms of reference are available [here](#). The review is expected to be published early in 2019.

SEND Tribunal: Single Route of Redress National Trial

12. Guidance on the single route of redress national trial, which begins on 3 April 2018, has been published and can be accessed [here](#). The two-year national trial extends the powers of the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) to make non-binding recommendations on the health and social care aspects of Education, Health and Care Plans, in addition to the educational aspects.
13. The guidance sets out the extended powers and duties in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(First-tier Tribunal Recommendations Power\) Regulations 2017](#), and explains how the appeal process will work, what happens if recommendations are not followed and the support available for commissioners and families. A toolkit providing a number of resources has been created [here](#).

Implementation of Children and Social Work Act 2017 Sections 1-7

14. Sections 1 to 7 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) (the Act) made changes to the legislative framework for looked after and previously looked after children, and care leavers. Following public consultation, the DfE has published guidance to assist LAs and other agencies in implementing these elements of the Act.

15. Sections 1 to 3 of the Act introduced: corporate parenting principles to which LAs must have regard when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers; a requirement to consult on and publish a local offer for care leavers; and extended eligibility for support from a personal adviser to all care leavers up to the age of 25. These new duties will come in to force from April 2018.
16. The DfE has published the following statutory guidance to help implement these changes:
- [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers](#) - To help LAs implement the corporate parenting principles
 - [Local Offer for care leavers guidance](#) - To guide LAs on consulting on, and publishing in one place, the statutory entitlements and other discretionary support available to care leavers
 - [Extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25](#) - To help LAs implement the extended duty for Personal Adviser support to be made available to all care leavers up to age 25, if they want such support.
17. In relation to the above, the DfE have also published:
- [The Government's response to the consultation on the earlier drafts of the above statutory guidance](#)
 - [The New Burdens assessment on the extension of the Personal Adviser duty.](#)
18. Sections 4 to 7 of the Act expand the role of Virtual School Heads (VSH) and designated teachers to include certain previously looked after children (those who left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales). The new duties for VSH and designated teachers will come in to force from September 2018.
19. The DfE has published the following statutory guidance aimed at local authorities, schools and school governing bodies to help them implement these changes:
- Revised statutory guidance on [Promoting Education of Looked after Children](#)
 - Revised statutory guidance on the [Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked after children](#)
 - [The Government response to consultation on draft statutory guidance on Promoting Education of Looked after Children and Roles and Responsibilities the Designated Teacher.](#)

Working Together consultation response

20. The DfE has published the outcome of its recent consultation on proposed updates to the Working Together (WT) statutory guidance. Over 700 responses were received during this exercise and these will inform further work on WT, particularly in relation to the new sections which underpin the

reforms to multiagency safeguarding arrangements under the Children and Social Work Act (2017).

21. The updates will be debated and voted on by both Houses of Parliament in the Spring. Local areas will have twelve months from the date of commencement to develop and publish their arrangements, and a further three months to implement them in full. The full outcome can be accessed [here](#).

Consultation on Social Work England

22. The Department for Education has launched a consultation on the legal framework underpinning the new professional regulator for social workers in England, Social Work England.
23. The new regulator will undertake core regulatory functions including: setting standards; holding the professional register; approving initial education and training courses for social workers; and running a 'fitness to practise' system. The consultation seeks views on: the proposed approach to creating a modern, proportionate regulatory framework; the specific approach taken in each of the regulatory areas; possible oversight procedures for regulatory rules; and, the likely impacts of the proposed changes.
24. The consultation ran from 08 February to 21 March 2018. Details can be found [here](#).

Improvement standards for child and family social workers

25. The government has published their response to the consultation regarding the knowledge and skills statements (KSS). The full report can be accessed [here](#).
26. Given the positive response to the consultation, the Secretary of State for Education has decided to determine the KSS for child and family social work practitioners and practice supervisors as the post-qualifying improvement standards. The updated KSS guidance can be found [here](#).

Review of children in need

27. The DfE has published information on the government's policy to support children in need and build the evidence base on how to improve their educational outcomes.
28. The *Children in need of help and protection: call for evidence* asks what professionals across education, children's social care, health and other specialist services are doing to improve the educational outcomes of children in need. The consultation is open until 1 June 2018 and can be found [here](#).

Plans to tackle child abuse

29. Further to the Home Office and DfE joint consultation, 'Reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect', which proposed changes to the law included mandatory reporting of any concern relating to child abuse by practitioners,

and a duty to act (whereby individuals could face professional or criminal sanctions for failing to take appropriate action where child abuse was known or suspected), not being supported, the government has set out new plans to strengthen information sharing between police, social workers and healthcare professionals to tackle child abuse and neglect, and to improve joint working and decision-making. Outline plans can be found [here](#).

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