

Helen Hayes MP
Chair, Education Select Committee
Via email helen.hayes.mp@parliament.uk

2 January 25

Dear Helen Hayes,

Thank you for the opportunity to represent BASW England at the Education Select Committee's evidence session as part of the inquiry into children's social care. It was the first time for me to give Evidence at a Select Committee and a privilege to contribute, I found the committee's questions to be informed, considered and fair. On reflection, there are two areas where I feel additional clarification would have been valuable, and I hope it is appropriate to provide this now:

1. **Social work training and development**

While I touched on the importance of bursaries for students entering the profession, there was limited time to explore broader issues related to initial and post-qualifying training. I want to emphasise the need to review and strengthen generalist training pathways delivered through universities. While alternative routes into the profession offer flexibility, they should complement, not detract from, the value of traditional student-university models. Recent developments, such as the closure of Sheffield University's social work programme, highlight the importance of protecting these entry points and ensuring they remain viable. Additionally, post-qualifying training should not overly focus on child protection specialism at the expense of other critical areas such as disabilities. Social workers play a vital role in family support, early help, particularly for families of children with disabilities, as well as fostering, adoption, and reunification work. Training must reflect this breadth of responsibility to equip social workers to support children and families.

2. **Accountability in social work**

I appreciated the opportunity to discuss accountability within the profession, but I would like to highlight the significance of "social worker" as a protected title. Registered social workers are held to account for their professional practice, which underpins trust and accountability within the system. While collaborative, place-based working with support from other qualified staff is essential, it is crucial to retain a strong presence of qualified social workers across all areas of children's services, including early help and family support. We are concerned that the focus on specialist child protection teams, as outlined in the proposed reforms, could inadvertently narrow early career training and weaken the broader skillset required across children's services. A more balanced approach is

necessary to ensure that social workers are equipped to meet the diverse needs of children and families.

I hope that the above points can be forwarded to members of the committee for their consideration.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to engage with the committee and contribute to this important inquiry. I would be happy to provide further evidence or clarification if needed.

Yours sincerely



Maris Stratulis
National Director, BASW England