

Education Committee

Scrutiny of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Second Report of Session 2024–25

HC 732

Education Committee

The Education Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Education and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Helen Hayes](#) (Labour; Dulwich and West Norwood) (Chair)

[Jess Asato](#) (Labour; Lowestoft)

[Mrs Sureena Brackenridge](#) (Labour; Wolverhampton North East)

[Dr Caroline Johnson](#) (Conservative; Sleaford and North Hykeham)

[Amanda Martin](#) (Labour; Portsmouth North)

[Darren Paffey](#) (Labour; Southampton Itchen)

[Manuela Perteghella](#) (Liberal Democrat; Stratford-on-Avon)

[Mark Swards](#) (Labour; Leeds South West and Morley)

[Patrick Spencer](#) (Conservative; Central Suffolk and North Ipswich)

[Dr Marie Tidball](#) (Labour; Penistone and Stocksbridge)

[Caroline Voaden](#) (Liberal Democrat; South Devon)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

This Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report, was Ordered by the House of Commons, on 25 February 2025, to be printed. It was published on 28 February 2025 by authority of the House of Commons.
© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2025.

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/copyright.

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/education-committee and in print by Order of the House.

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Education Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 2370; the Committee's email address is educom@parliament.uk. You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsEd](https://twitter.com/CommonsEd).

Contents

	Summary	1
1	The Bill	3
	Initial stages	3
	Our scrutiny	6
	Part 1 of the Bill: Children’s social care	7
	National offer for care leavers	7
	Mental health support for children in care	8
	Part 2 of the Bill: Schools	10
	Breakfast clubs	10
	Free school meals	12
	Other themes raised in evidence	15
	Children’s social care	15
	Child protection and safeguarding	15
	The social care market	16
	Family group decision-making	17
	Kinship care	18
	Schools	18
	Uniforms	18
	Academies	19
	Admissions	20
	Children not in school and independent educational establishments	22

Next steps	24
Conclusions and recommendations	26
Formal minutes	29
Witnesses	30
Published written evidence	33
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	41

Summary

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is an important plank in the Government's Opportunity Mission, "to break the link between young people's background and their future success". We welcome the scale of this ambition.

However, the Government has not engaged as productively as we would have liked with our Committee over this Bill. The decision not to involve our Committee in pre-legislative scrutiny, or even to give us prior notice of the Bill's publication, has made it more difficult for us to conduct proper scrutiny. The Bill's timetable has been rushed and inadequate. The Government must engage meaningfully, and in a timely way, with select committees on important legislation.

We heard evidence about the Bill's provisions on support for care leavers and on the importance of mental health support for children in care. Our witnesses supported the view that a National Care Offer would help mitigate the variation in local offers for care leavers and help care leavers understand their entitlements. Our panel of care-experienced young people emphasised the importance of mental health support and suggested that local authorities are not always fulfilling their obligations to assess the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children in their care. The assessment and treatment of the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the care system must be improved.

We welcome measures in the Bill to improve child protection, including the provisions to establish multi-agency child protection teams, including education in safeguarding arrangements, and a single unique identifier for children. We heard broadly positive views about the measures to improve the children's social care market through regional commissioning and a financial oversight scheme, but lessons must be learnt from the pilot Regional Care Co-operatives that are currently operating. The proposal to give the Secretary of State the power to cap profits is positive but should only be used as a last resort, according to witnesses.

Witnesses agreed with the Bill's provision on family group decision-making, although some stated that the support should come at an earlier stage, and one witness warned of the risk of perpetrators of domestic abuse being involved. Witnesses welcomed the Bill's provisions on kinship care but called for more support to be available to children in kinship care and their carers.

On schools, our witnesses praised the inclusion of school breakfast clubs in the Bill and highlighted the importance of ensuring that they are fully accessible for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We consider that express inclusion of the needs of those children on the face of the Bill would be an important safeguard. Our witnesses were clear that low uptake of free school meals contributed to hunger at school for children living with deprivation. Auto-enrolment in free school meals for those children currently eligible would alleviate hunger and improve health and educational outcomes for the poorest children.

The Bill brings in wide-ranging changes to academy status and its freedoms. Some witnesses expressed concerns about the reductions in academy freedoms, while others welcomed greater oversight, but on balance, there were no strong concerns about the changes to academy status. We welcome the additional clarity on teacher pay (“a floor but no ceiling”) offered by the Government’s new clause and new schedule at Committee stage.

We heard concerns from home education representatives about the registers of children not in school and the regulation of independent educational establishments, but local authority representatives welcomed both changes. We heard suggestions that local authorities could help to secure access to, and funding for, public examinations for home educated children, and could support their access to CAMHS, educational psychology or a SENCO.

We have worked at pace to fulfil our scrutiny role within the parameters set by the Government’s timetable and to increase transparency for the benefit of the House and, we hope, those who will be affected by the legislation. We have tested the Bill’s provisions with stakeholders and policy experts and produced this Report with the aim of assisting the House at Report stage and Third Reading.

We draw the Government’s attention to the New Clauses and amendments tabled in the name of our Chair, which offer practical ways to meet the concerns we have heard in evidence from witnesses and put into effect their recommendations.

1 The Bill

Initial stages

1. The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill aims to play a key role in meeting the Government’s ambition “to break the link between young people’s background and their future success”.¹ According to the Policy Summary Notes published with the Bill, its provisions will “drive high and rising standards throughout our education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive ... protect children at risk of abuse, stopping vulnerable children falling through cracks in services, and deliver a core guarantee of high standards with space for innovation in every child’s education”.²
2. **CONCLUSION**
We welcome the scale of the Government’s ambition in the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill. We join the Government in wanting to see high and rising standards in our education and care systems to protect vulnerable children and ensure educational opportunity for every child.
3. The Bill was published on 17 December 2024 and received its First Reading. Second Reading took place on 8 January and the Bill was committed to a Public Bill Committee, which met for the first time on 21 January. Three of our Committee members were appointed to the Public Bill Committee.³ The Public Bill Committee took oral evidence from 26 witnesses, including Ministers, in morning and afternoon sittings on 21 January. The Committee then considered the Bill line-by-line over a further 12 sittings, reporting to the House on 11 February.⁴
4. The Bill was published as Bill 155 with 60 Clauses and 2 Schedules; after consideration by the Public Bill Committee, several changes had been made and it was reprinted with those changes as the “Bill as Amended in Committee” (Bill 177). The Public Bill Committee had added a new clause

1 [Break down Barriers to Opportunity](#), Plan for Change, Prime Minister’s Office

2 Department for Education, [Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill: Policy Summary Notes](#), January 2025, p. 5

3 Amanda Martin, Darren Paffey and Patrick Spencer

4 Public Bill Committee, Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill, [Committee Debates](#) and [Committee Stage Decisions](#)

brought forward by the Government (on Care leavers not to be regarded as becoming homeless intentionally) which became Clause 9 in the Bill. The Committee agreed a new clause brought forward by the Government to replace Clause 45 (Extension of statutory pay and conditions arrangements to Academy teachers) which became Clause 46 (Pay and conditions of Academy teachers) and a consequential Schedule (on Pay and Conditions of Academy Teachers: Amendments to the Education Act 2002). Eleven Government amendments were made.⁵ References in this Report are to the Bill as Amended in Committee.

5. The Minister for School Standards wrote to members of the Education Committee on 17 December, stating that she was “keen to work closely” with the Committee on the Bill. We responded on 18 December to express our “profound dissatisfaction” with the Government’s decision not to give us prior notice of the Bill’s publication, despite wide trailing in the media, and despite having previously indicated to Ministers our eagerness to engage in pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill.⁶
6. The Cabinet Office Guide to Making Legislation states that “[t]he Government is committed to, wherever possible, publishing bills in draft for pre-legislative scrutiny”, which is “normally carried out by the relevant Commons departmental select committee”. The Guidance states that publication in draft for pre-legislative scrutiny “allows thorough consultation while the bill is in a more easily amendable form and makes it easier to ensure that both potential parliamentary objections and stakeholder views are elicited [which] can assist the passage of the bill when it is introduced to Parliament at a later stage and increases scrutiny of government legislation”. The Cabinet Office advises departments to allow ample time for scrutiny as “[g]enerally a committee will need at least three to four months to take evidence and report” and leaving committees insufficient time has led to “serious criticism”.⁷

7. **CONCLUSION**

The Government did not, in this case, publish the Bill in draft. Nonetheless, the Bill’s timetable could have factored in time for our Committee to come to a considered view on its contents. Although the Minister for School Standards had written to us of her wish to “work closely” with the Committee, no allowance was made for select committee scrutiny in the Bill’s extremely compressed timetable.

5 [Bill 151 2024–25 \(as introduced\)](#), [Bill 177 2024–25 \(as amended in Public Bill Committee\)](#), [Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill \(Committee Stage Decisions\)](#)

6 [Correspondence with the Minister for Standards](#), 17 December, and 18 December 2024

7 Cabinet Office, [Guide to Making Legislation](#), 2022

8. Moreover, the Bill was published on the day of the opening evidence session of our inquiry into Children’s Social Care, to which many of the provisions of the Bill are relevant, and our questioning would have been better informed had we had prior notice of the Bill’s contents.⁸
9. The Cabinet Office Guide to Making Legislation states that the interval between First and Second Reading is “normally two weekends following publication”.⁹ In the case of this Bill, the letter of the guidance was followed, but the spirit was not. It is very difficult for the House to prepare for the Second Reading of a Bill over the Christmas Recess with no prior consultation on the policy issues or publication in draft. While the publication of ‘Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive’ in November had trailed some of the policy detail of the Children’s Social Care measures in the Bill, there had been no such policy document for the measures on schools, which constituted 40 of the 60 Clauses of the Bill as introduced.¹⁰
10. According to the Cabinet Office Guide to Making Legislation, before the introduction of the Bill, the Government must “[e]nsure that all other supporting documents (including: delegated powers memo, impact assessment, ECHR memo, where needed) are cleared and ready for publication”.¹¹ Further, “[a]n impact assessment must be published when a government bill ... is introduced in either House”.¹² The Bill’s Human Rights Memorandum and Delegated Powers Memorandum were published alongside the Bill but the Impact Assessment, which runs to 67 pages, was not published until 30 January, at which point the Public Bill Committee had already dealt with the first 20 Clauses of the Bill.¹³

8 [Children’s Social Care](#)

9 Cabinet Office, [Guide to Making Legislation](#), 2022, para 24.4

10 Department for Education, [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive: Breaking down barriers to opportunity](#), CP 1200, November 2024

11 Cabinet Office, [Guide to Making Legislation](#), 2022, para 27

12 As above, para 13.10

13 Department for Education, [Final Stage Impact Assessment](#), 30 January 2025

11. CONCLUSION

The Government has neither followed its own guidelines, nor engaged as productively as we would have liked with our Committee over this Bill. The interval between introduction and Second Reading was not long enough for proper preparation by Members of the House. The publication of the Impact Assessment over a month after the Bill was introduced and halfway through the consideration of the Bill in Committee, shows scant regard for the House. The decision not to involve our Committee in pre-legislative scrutiny, or even to give us prior notice of the Bill's publication, has made it more difficult for us to conduct proper scrutiny of the Bill. Had we been involved at an earlier stage, we could have fed our findings into the Bill itself and this process would also have allowed the Government to respond to issues raised by stakeholders in advance of Second Reading.

12. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Government undertakes to follow the Cabinet Office Guide to Making Legislation and engage meaningfully, and in a timely way, with select committees as a way of improving policy making and building consensus on important legislation. We further recommend that the Government provide a memorandum to the Liaison Committee demonstrating how it plans to engage with select committees on legislation over the Parliament.

Our scrutiny

13. We considered the Clauses of the Bill that deal with children's social care in the course of our evidence sessions for our Children's Social Care inquiry, on 21 January and 11 February. We took evidence from witnesses on the provisions dealing with schools on 4 February.

14. CONCLUSION

We would have liked to dedicate more time to a considered examination of the policy issues in the Bill and the mechanisms by which the Bill seeks to meet its policy aims. However, given the tight timetable the Government has provided for this Bill, and our wish to contribute effectively by proposing changes to the Bill where necessary, we have had to be extremely selective in the parts of the Bill we have examined. We have sought to learn from, and amplify, the voices of the practitioners, families and professionals who will be directly affected by the Bill.

Part 1 of the Bill: Children’s social care

15. We took evidence on 21 January and 11 February on the Bill’s provisions relating to children’s social care, including its clauses relating to child protection and safeguarding (Clauses 2, 3 and 4); support for care leavers (Clauses 7 and 8); the social care market (Clauses 10 and 14–17); and kinship care and family group decision-making (Clauses 1, 5 and 6). We also took evidence from a panel of care-experienced young people on 11 February, who talked about their experiences in care and their recommendations for change, some of which relate to provisions in the Bill.

National offer for care leavers

16. Clause 8 of the Bill would amend section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to require a local authority to publish its arrangements for supporting and assisting care leavers in their transition to adulthood and independent living, as part of its local offer for care leavers.¹⁴
17. Witnesses were generally supportive of this measure but called for it to be expanded to introduce a national offer for care leavers to go alongside the local offer. Denise Rawls, Executive Director of the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL), told us that every local authority offer is different, particularly regarding support for the education of care leavers. Care leavers experienced inconsistent levels of support in accessing university accommodation and wi-fi at home. Ringfenced apprenticeships were available to care leavers in some local authorities but not others. She told us that the NNECL would “strongly support a revised national offer” and emphasised that they “do not want anyone to miss out from that, so we do not want people to make that less than it is, but it needs to reflect what our young people need now.”¹⁵
18. The young people we heard from also discussed the difficulties they faced on leaving care and trying to understand the support that was available to them. Jake Hartley talked of having had mixed experiences with personal advisers, with his first adviser not communicating with him or providing

14 [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

15 [Oral evidence taken on 11 February 2025](#), Q410

the support that he needed, but a subsequent adviser being “absolutely amazing” and ensuring that he was aware of the support he was entitled to.¹⁶ Louise Fitt told us:

When I had gone to the jobcentres they were very ill-prepared. They did not know any support for care leavers. There were certain grants I could have had to get back into education; they did not inform me, in fact, everything that I have done now is from me Googling it basically or asking people. That should not be the case [...] It is not nice being left on your own at 18 to go into the adult world and to figure it out.¹⁷

19. CONCLUSION

Care leavers face a confusing patchwork of entitlements when they leave care. This is made more complex by the differing offers in each local authority and the fact that they are having to navigate this at a young age, often with little or no support. Our witnesses supported the view that a National Care Offer would help with this.

Mental health support for children in care

20. We heard a great deal of evidence about the importance of mental health support for children in care, particularly from the care-experienced young people we heard from. All four young people described having had experiences of mental health problems since being taken into care and emphasised the importance of strong and consistent mental health provision for children in care.¹⁸
21. Regulation 7 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 requires local authorities to ensure that a health assessment is carried out by a registered medical practitioner for every child they look after.¹⁹ Section 1 of Schedule 1 of the regulations sets out the areas which should be included in the assessment, which include the child’s physical, emotional and mental health.
22. However, evidence from the young people suggested that emotional and mental health is not always being included in practice. Lamar Mohsen told us:

Growing up it was only physical assessments, we didn’t have mental health check-ins at all. If my mental health was taken more seriously from a young age [...] I would probably be so much better

16 [Q428](#)

17 [Q428](#)

18 [Q429](#)

19 [The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)

[...] mental health check-ins are equally as important—if not more important—as physical check-ins for children in care.

Louise Fitt agreed that every child should have a mandatory physical and mental health assessment, which should be followed by consistent support for both the child and for their carers.²⁰

23.

CONCLUSION

Young people in care are significantly more likely to have experienced trauma and adverse experiences than their peers, and therefore strong mental health support is crucial. Although local authorities are required to assess the emotional and mental health of children in their care, evidence suggests this does not always happen in practice. Our witnesses were clear that there is scope to strengthen the requirement for the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the care system to be assessed.

Part 2 of the Bill: Schools

- 24.** We took evidence on 4 February on the Bill’s provisions relating to breakfast clubs (Clause 22), uniforms (Clause 24), academies (a range of Clauses including 42–45, 49 and 52), admissions (48–51), Children not in school (Clauses 25–30) and Independent educational institutions (Clauses 31–38).²¹ We tried as far as possible to avoid overlap with the witnesses who had already given oral evidence to the Public Bill Committee on 21 January. We received written memoranda from some of our witnesses, and additional memoranda from Uniform Direct, Camilla Jones and the Confederation of School Trusts.²²

Breakfast clubs

- 25.** We took evidence from Kate Anstey, Head of Education Policy, Child Poverty Action Group, Dr Rebecca Montacute, Head of Research and Policy, Sutton Trust and Dr Lindsey MacDonald, Chief Executive, Magic Breakfast, on the breakfast club provisions of the Bill. The evidence we took (detailed below) made a compelling case for the explicit inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in breakfast clubs. Our witnesses also made persuasive arguments for improving take up of free school meals for those children currently eligible.
- 26.** Our witnesses praised the inclusion of breakfast clubs in the Bill. For example, Kate Anstey said: “[f]or lots of families, breakfast clubs can be a good option to enable families to work, to support children at the beginning of the day with school readiness and to provide families with food”.²³ Dr MacDonald said:
- A traditional breakfast club is a wonderful soft start to the day. It offers that childcare opportunity for parents, and it also offers the opportunity for socialisation.²⁴
- 27.** However, witnesses also raised concerns about whether the model of provision in the Bill was too restrictive and did not provide for monitoring and measuring. Dr MacDonald, whose organisation provides breakfasts to

21 [Oral evidence on the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#), HC 665, 4 February 2025; Bill as introduced, [Bill 151, 2024–25](#) and Bill as amended in Committee, [Bill 177 2024–05](#)

22 [CWS01](#), [CSW02](#), [CWS03](#), [CSW04](#), [CWS05](#)

23 [Q5](#)

24 [Q1](#)

300,000 school children every day, told us that a “mixed model approach” would be the best way of allowing schools to accommodate the needs of different children and families, including children with SEND.²⁵ She also said that the food standards regime for schools should be considered to ensure the breakfasts provided are nutritious.²⁶ Dr Rebecca Montacute stated that “[o]ne of the issues will definitely be whether or not [the policy] ends up being adequately funded”, a concern that was echoed by Kate Anstey; and raised the issue of school transport to breakfast clubs for children whose parents and carers could not drop them off in the morning.²⁷

- 28.** In the course of our evidence sessions for our inquiry on Solving the SEND Crisis, we have heard repeatedly that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are not adequately supported within schools. When we took evidence from the Secretary of State on her ministerial responsibilities, she said that “children with SEND have been forgotten for far too long” and that “[i]f we want all children to succeed and excel at school, that has to extend to children with SEND as well”.²⁸
- 29.** Children with SEND are covered implicitly by the clauses on breakfast clubs. Clause 22 provides that:

The appropriate authority of a relevant school in England must secure that breakfast club provision is available, free of charge, for all qualifying primary pupils at the school.

and “qualifying primary pupil” is defined as

a junior pupil who is a registered pupil at the school and—

(a) is of compulsory school age, or

(b) is not of compulsory school age but is in reception at the school.

25 [Q1](#)

26 [Q1](#)

27 [Q1](#)

28 [Oral evidence: The Work of the Department for Education](#), HC 540, Wednesday 15 January 2025, Q18

30.

CONCLUSION

Despite the implicit inclusion of children with SEND in the Bill’s provisions on breakfast clubs, we consider that express inclusion of the needs of those children on the face of the Bill would be a much stronger safeguard against schools failing—for reasons of cost, convenience and accident—to put in place commonsense measures to ensure that children with SEND have equal access to breakfast clubs. There are also implications for local authorities who fund home to school transport for many children with SEND and who would be required to make transport available on a more flexible basis, potentially at additional cost, to enable children to get to a breakfast club. Strengthening the inclusion requirements of breakfast clubs on the face of the Bill would place the onus on the Department for Education to take account of this requirement when allocating funds for the national roll-out of breakfast clubs and making the case to HM Treasury for those monies in the upcoming Spending Review.

Free school meals

31. Witnesses agreed that breakfast clubs alone were not enough to tackle nutrition in schools for the most deprived children.²⁹ Kate Anstey stated that “alongside breakfasts, the free school meals piece is absolutely essential” and that “[w]e absolutely feel that it is a missed opportunity in this Bill to not look at the free school meals policy and ensure that free school meals are going to many more children who are struggling”.³⁰ She said that “around 1 in 10 children who are eligible for that free school meal are not registered for it” and that the reasons included “the admin process, families not knowing they are entitled and language challenges for families”.³¹ Ms Anstey said that “where children can access that meal each day, it makes a huge difference”. She described an evaluation of the Mayor of London’s policy of universal free school meals in primary schools:

one in three families were saying that it was improving their child’s mental health and wellbeing and that their children were enjoying school more. A big finding was that children were able to try new foods because they were sitting down with their friends and teachers together. We also know from teachers that there is a knock-on effect in terms of the rest of the day. Concentration levels go up and the afternoon lessons are calmer.³²

29 [Q7](#)

30 [Q1](#)

31 [Q7](#)

32 [Q7](#)

32. School lunches are free to children at maintained schools from Reception to Year 2. From Year 3, free lunches are subject to eligibility criteria.³³ Under the Education Act 1996, section 512ZB (Provision of free school lunches and milk), eligibility itself is not sufficient to trigger provision of a free lunch: children or their families must also apply to their local authority. The Act states:

(1) Where the local authority provide a school lunch in accordance with section 512(3) to a person who is eligible for free lunches, the authority shall provide the meal free of charge.

(2) For this purpose a person is eligible for free lunches if—

(a) he is within subsection (4) [or (4A) (or both)], and

(b) a request that the school lunches be provided free of charge has been made by him or on his behalf to the authority.³⁴

Subsections (4) and (4A) give eligibility criteria.

33. Kate Anstey said that the solution to low enrolment in free school meals was automatic enrolment of eligible children, without a requirement to apply to the local authority, and that there were “lots of brilliant schemes ... at local authority level, where families are being auto-enrolled or they have a sort of opt-out process”. Dr Montacute said, “it is really important to make sure that the kids who are eligible for free school meals are actually able to access them.” She explained that as pupil premium funding is tied to the number of children receiving free school meals in a school, enrolment had “knock-on effects as to the pupil premium that schools are able to access for pupils, and then wider attainment interventions that they can then do for that group to try to tackle their attainment levels”.³⁵

34. We asked the Secretary of State about auto-enrolment in free school meals when she gave evidence to us on the work of her Department on 15 January. She said:

We continue to look very carefully at this right across government with other colleagues ... I understand the arguments that are made about auto-enrolment and we continue to look carefully at that.³⁶

33 [Gov.uk, Apply for free school meals](https://www.gov.uk/government/forms/apply-for-free-school-meals)

34 [Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/512/section-512zb)

35 [Q7](#)

36 [Oral evidence: The Work of the Department for Education](#), HC 540, Wednesday 15 January 2025, Q6

35.

CONCLUSION

We consider that the arguments for auto-enrolment in free school meals for those children currently eligible are conclusive. In the interests of alleviating hunger in schools and improving health and educational outcomes for the poorest children, auto-enrolment must be brought in without delay.

Other themes raised in evidence

Children’s social care

Child protection and safeguarding

- 36.** The witnesses we heard from in our session on child protection on 21 January were generally supportive of the Bill’s provisions relating to child protection and safeguarding. Witnesses welcomed the proposal to include education in safeguarding arrangements and were supportive of the decision not to make schools the fourth statutory safeguarding partner.³⁷ We also heard positive views about the proposal to establish multi-agency child protection teams, although some witnesses suggested that there was still a lot of detail to be worked out as to how the teams would work, which would need to be tested and learned from in the pilots. Rob Williams, Senior Policy Adviser at the National Association of Head Teachers, and Andy Smith, President of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services, both raised the issue of workload and workforce wellbeing, highlighting that this should not be seen as an additional expectation on the workforce, and that improved resourcing and action to reduce staff turnover were also needed to improve safeguarding.³⁸
- 37.** Witnesses were broadly supportive of the proposal to introduce a single unique identifier (SUI) for children but emphasised the importance of taking a cautious approach in rolling it out and ensuring that data protection is carefully managed. Annie Hudson, Chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, also stated that many agencies already have “voluminous information” about children and that “often the challenge is not that the information is not there but being able to dig down and find the right bit of information”.³⁹ The Secretary of State told us that she was aware of the

37 [Oral evidence taken on 21 January 2025, Q377](#)

38 [Qq370–371](#)

39 [Q375](#)

concerns about data security and stated that the Government would be piloting the SUI to “test all this and ensure that information is being shared in a way that is completely appropriate”.⁴⁰

The social care market

- 38.** Witnesses broadly welcomed the measures in the Bill to improve the functioning of the market, including the proposed financial oversight scheme, the introduction of regional care co-operatives, and the possibility of a future cap on profits. Dan Turnbull, Senior Director for Markets at the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), said that the “key provisions are there” for the financial oversight scheme, but “the proof will be in the implementation”, highlighting the importance of ensuring that appropriate expertise is available in managing the scheme.⁴¹ Witnesses did not express a view on where the oversight scheme should sit and who it should be managed by, but Roger Gough, Children’s Service Spokesperson for the County Councils Network (CCN), stated that it should not be managed by local authorities, as this would cause a conflict of interest.⁴² Witnesses were similarly supportive of the powers in the Bill to direct local authorities to introduce regional co-operation arrangements: Dan Turnbull said that the CMA were “very supportive” of the proposal, but emphasised the importance of local authorities using these to “engage with the market more proactively” in order to make a difference in the market.⁴³ Similarly, Roger Gough said that “the general principle seems to be a sound one”, but highlighted the need for learning from the current pilots, particularly regarding the need to ensure that the co-operatives cover the right areas.⁴⁴
- 39.** Witnesses broadly agreed with the proposal to give the Secretary of State the power to cap profits as a last resort but emphasised that it should only be used if no other measures have been successful. Roger Gough said that it was “worth having as a power if other measures don’t work”, but that the root causes of high profits should be addressed first, and Dan Turnbull agreed that it was “very sensible to have as a backstop”, but “would not recommend it as the first policy direction to go in”.⁴⁵ Both warned that there were risks involved with implementing a profit cap, including a risk of restricting the supply of places and in causing providers to exit the market, and Dan Turnbull highlighted the difficulty of designing a cap for a market such as social care, as the services being provided are diverse and

40 [Oral evidence: The Work of the Department for Education](#), HC 540, Wednesday 15 January 2025, Q2

41 [Oral evidence taken on 11 February 2025](#), Q384

42 [Q388](#)

43 [Q386](#)

44 [Q394](#)

45 [Q389](#)

reflect differing needs.⁴⁶ Dan Turnbull also suggested that the cap should be implemented in a “flexible, nimble way”, so that it could be adapted in response to companies seeking to avoid the cap.⁴⁷

Family group decision-making

40. Witnesses were supportive of the Bill’s proposal to require local authorities to offer a family group decision-making (FGDM) meeting before applying to take a child into care, and Anna Edmundson, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at the NSPCC, particularly welcomed the explicit inclusion of children’s views in the proposals. Both Anna Edmundson and Lynn Perry, Chief Executive of Barnardo’s, highlighted that FGDM comes at a relatively late stage in the process and that earlier support should also be offered.⁴⁸ This was echoed in written evidence from Cafcass and the Family Rights Group.⁴⁹ The Family Rights Group also stated that the FGDM offer in the Bill is “too ambiguous” and that key principles should be defined in the legislation to ensure that local authorities follow best practice when offering FGDM.

We heard some concerns about the risk of perpetrators of domestic abuse being involved in FGDM meetings, with Claire Throssell, a survivor of domestic abuse and public speaker, warning that they could “bully, harass or manipulate the situation” to put children in danger.⁵⁰ The Family Rights Group also highlighted the importance of practitioners being trained in domestic abuse and said that there needed to be “careful management of risk and safety planning” when offering FGDM to victims of domestic abuse.⁵¹ In its policy summary to the Bill, the Government has responded to these concerns by stating that local authorities would have discretion over whether it is in the child’s best interest to offer FGDM and that participation in the meetings would be voluntary.⁵²

41. CONCLUSION

We consider that local authorities should draw on the advice of specialist domestic abuse charities in coming to a decision on whether FGDM is in the child’s best interests where domestic abuse has occurred.

46 [Q391](#)

47 [Q391](#)

48 [Oral evidence taken on 21 January 2025, Q361](#)

49 [Cafcass \(CWS0007\)](#); [Family Rights Group \(CSW0008\)](#)

50 [Q361](#)

51 [Family Rights Group \(CSW0008\)](#)

52 Department for Education, [Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill - policy summary notes](#), p.9

Kinship care

42. Sam Turner, Associate Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Kinship, welcomed the Bill's provision for a definition of children living in kinship care and kinship carers and said that the definition "gets it right in terms of the breadth", but suggested that the Government would be "undermining the very value of that definition" by only providing support to certain groups of kinship children and carers.⁵³ He supported the requirement for local authorities to publish a "kinship local offer", but stated that "there isn't a huge amount of point signposting to support that doesn't exist", and that local authorities should consider what support they make available to kinship carers as part of the offer.⁵⁴
43. Regarding the extension of Virtual School Heads (VSHs) to children in kinship care, Sam Turner acknowledged that the extension of support was the right thing to do but highlighted that there are gaps in the support that VSHs can offer to children in kinship care; for example, Pupil Premium Plus is not available for children in kinship care unless they were previously looked after. He said that future legislation should aim to "harmonise that patchwork of educational support" for all children who have experienced trauma, separation and loss.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Roger Gough argued that there was a danger of "spreading a good thing too thinly" in extending the role of VSHs, and that the needs of children in kinship care are different from those in other forms of care.⁵⁶

Schools

Uniforms

44. Clause 24 of the Bill amends the Education Act 1996 to limit the number of branded items of uniform a primary school may require its pupils to purchase to three items. Our witnesses welcomed these provisions. In addition, Kate Anstey said that she would like the restriction of the number to apply to secondary school pupils as well as primary school pupils; and called for "lower-income families to be given grant support with the cost of uniform".⁵⁷ Dr Rebecca Montacute called for the number of items to be restricted further to a single item.⁵⁸

53 [Q402](#)

54 [Q403](#)

55 [Q404](#)

56 [Q405](#)

57 [Q9](#)

58 [Q10](#)

Academies

45. The Bill brings in wide-ranging changes to academy status and the freedoms it has hitherto entailed. Clause 44 allows the Secretary of State for Education to direct an academy trust to do (or not do) something if it is failing to discharge its powers or meet its duties. Clause 45 repeals the duty of the Secretary of State to make an academy order (which begins the process of conversion of a maintained school to an academy) if a maintained school is in special measures or has serious weaknesses. Clauses 52–56 remove the requirement for most new schools to be academies and restore the powers of local authorities and other bodies to propose new maintained schools and pupil referral units. Other Clauses require academies to follow the National Curriculum (Clause 42), extend to academies the statutory requirements on pay and conditions that apply to teachers in maintained schools (Clause 45) and require teachers in academies to have, or be working towards, Qualified Teacher Status (Clause 41).

46. During the Committee stage of the Bill, the Government brought forward a new Clause in place of Clause 45 (Pay and conditions of Academy teachers) and a consequential new Schedule. The effect of this new clause and new Schedule was to “provide additional clarity” that the intention of the Government was not to reduce teacher pay in academies but to set a minimum core pay offer for all teachers: in the words of the Minister for School Standards, to “create a floor with no ceiling”.⁵⁹

47. **CONCLUSION**

We welcome the additional clarity on teacher pay offered by the Government’s new clause and new schedule brought forward at Committee stage.

48. We took evidence from John Barneby, Chief Executive Officer of Oasis Community Learning, a multi-academy trust, Daniel Kebede, General Secretary of the National Education Union and Sam Freedman, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government on these provisions.

49. On the provisions reducing the flexibilities of academies, John Barneby said that in “the past 10 years ... a lot of innovation has come out of academies and it has come out of those freedoms”; Daniel Kebede said that “non-academised state schools are also incredibly innovative”. Sam Freedman said that he didn’t think the changes would “make an enormous difference”.⁶⁰

59 [Public Bill Committee, Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Committee Debates](#), Col 404

60 [Q13](#)

50. On the provisions repealing the compulsory conversion of failing schools to academies, John Barneby said that “a significant number of schools have been improved through that compulsory route”. Sam Freedman said, “there are endless examples of schools that have been transformed by that process” but that there were “also plenty of examples of where that has not happened”. Daniel Kebede said that some academies had improved schools using high levels of suspensions and exclusions of pupils, which “entrenches ... social selection”.⁶¹
51. Ending the presumption that new schools would be academies “will help alleviate the crisis in SEND provision”, according to Daniel Kebede; although Sam Freedman said he did not “think it will make a huge amount of difference either way because the issue is money, not who gets to open a school”. John Barneby said that “we need to be thinking about how we work in partnership with local authorities and academies” and that he was “not sure whether the Bill fixes or causes a problem”.⁶²
52. On requiring teachers in academies to have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Daniel Kebede said the Government should be “unapologetic”; John Barneby, on the other hand, said that QTS was not “the problem” driving the recruitment “crisis”: “the employee value proposition” was “not good enough”. Sam Freedman said that QTS requirements would not have an effect on recruitment, but “it is hard to know” the effect of rules on teachers’ conditions, because “we just do not know the detail yet”.⁶³
53. On the requirements the Bill makes of academies to follow the National Curriculum, John Barneby noted that “very little detail” was available but that, should the requirement be a “framework-esque approach”, he would support it; a “very prescriptive model” would be “a step too far”. Daniel Kebede said that academies needed to be less prescriptive in what they required teachers to deliver in the classroom; Sam Freedman said he “would like to see it going in the other direction and giving maintained schools the same freedoms that academies currently have”.⁶⁴

Admissions

54. Clauses 48 to 51 of the Bill deal with school places and admissions. They require cooperation between schools and local authorities to allow local authorities to discharge their place-planning responsibilities, provide sufficient school places and ensure the effectiveness of the local Fair Access Protocol for placing vulnerable children as quickly as possible.⁶⁵ The Bill

61 [Q14](#)

62 [Q15](#)

63 [Qq19–20](#)

64 [Q22](#)

65 Department for Education, [Policy Summary Notes](#), p. 134

also extends local authority powers to direct a maintained school to admit a pupil, to academies, and enables the independent Schools Adjudicator to set a school's Published Admission Number (PAN) where the SA has upheld an objection to it. We asked our witnesses on academies and Dr Montacute from the Sutton Trust about admissions but also took evidence from Councillor Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council, representing the Local Government Association and Thomas Brooke, one of the interim joint Chief Schools Adjudicators.

55. John Barneby said that “the system drives a type of behaviour” and that the Ofsted behaviour measurement criterion “drives some schools to close their doors to some students”. He said that he hoped the Bill would lead to “a fair distribution of children with special educational needs and disadvantages children across all schools”. Sam Freedman said he would have liked the Bill to go further and allow local authorities to set admissions policies. He said that “autonomy [of schools] should be over what you do in the school, not over the children that you have in the school”.⁶⁶ Dr Montacute said that the Sutton Trust too had hoped that admissions policies would have been given to local authorities to coordinate and decide across an area, “to ensure that there is a socio-economic mix of children in each school in their community”.⁶⁷

56. Councillor Craig said that “across the country admissions can be quite fragmented” and that it was not clear whether the Bill recommended or mandated local authorities to take a place-planning approach to admissions. She said that:

you can have a coherent, planned system that prioritises a good quality of education, proximity to home and meeting the needs of the child. If you plan that in a sensible, coherent way at a local authority level, it leads to higher levels of satisfaction from parents.⁶⁸

57. Thomas Brooke said that the changes the Bill makes to extend to academies local authorities' powers to direct a maintained school to admit a child, was in fact an extension of “what may be a complex process” in place of the current “more streamlined” process in place for academies.⁶⁹ He said that the Office of the Schools Adjudicator was equipped to take on a more strategic role vis-à-vis admissions but that the detail was “yet to be set out in regulations and the school admissions code”.⁷⁰

66 [Q23](#)

67 [Q12](#)

68 [Q42](#)

69 [Q42](#)

70 [Q43](#)

Children not in school and independent educational establishments

- 58.** Clauses 25 to 30 require local authorities to create and maintain registers of children who are not in school, whether they have been taken out of school by their parents or have never been enrolled. This encompasses a range of children, including those whose parents have chosen Elective Home Education. The registers must contain information about the child and the education they are receiving outside school, including the people delivering it, its location and duration, with penalties liable to be imposed on those who do not provide the information. School Attendance Orders may be served on parents when the local authority is not satisfied that the child is receiving adequate education.
- 59.** Clauses 31 to 38 regulate “independent educational establishments” and expand the scope of regulation to include all institutions providing full-time education for at least five children or at least one child with special educational needs. “Full-time education” is defined as “all or a majority of” a child’s education. The Chief Inspector is granted powers to enter establishments to inspect provision, without, or if necessary, with, a warrant.
- 60.** We took evidence from Clare Canning, Head of Broadleaf Family Hub in the New Forest, which provides services to children in home education, who said that the Bill was “causing deep concern across the [home education] community”.⁷¹ She said that home education was “flexible, reflective, broad and rich in all the ways it needs to be to respond to the changing needs of each child” and catered to many children with SEND who could not cope with a school environment.⁷² On the Bill’s requirements on local authorities to support those providing home education to children, she said that local authorities could assist in securing access to, and funding for, public examinations. In addition, support with access to CAMHS and educational psychology or SENCO support would be “really good”.⁷³
- 61.** On registers of Children Not in School, Clare Canning said that “home education is just not a safeguarding concern” and that oversight of home education within “private family homes” by local authorities could cause trauma to vulnerable children with SEND.⁷⁴ She argued that the Bill’s requirement to provide information to local authorities on changes to home education within 15 days was “completely unworkable” and “an enormously

71 [Q30](#)

72 [Q35](#)

73 [Q29](#)

74 [Q35](#)

overwhelming burden on families”.⁷⁵ She said that if settings such as Broadleaf, which were staffed by volunteers, were captured by the Bill’s requirements on Independent Educational Establishments, they would have to close.⁷⁶

62. Councillor Craig, however, welcomed the registers for Children Not in School. She said that “the one thing that keeps councils up at night, every night--are you keeping your children safe?”.⁷⁷ She stated that the powers for local authorities to have supervision over home education environments was key: “our professionals believe that it is very important to be able to see the child in the home”.⁷⁸ She said that it would not be unreasonable to ask home educators what a child’s typical day or week might look like, although the timings for the return of information could be debated. The Government would need to provide clarity on how the additional requirements on local authorities would be “costed and remunerated”.⁷⁹

63. When we asked the Secretary of State about Children Not in School registers, she said that:

to ... parents who choose to home educate their children, if they are doing so to a good standard and they have their children’s best interests at heart ... they have nothing to be concerned about in the measures that we are setting out.⁸⁰

She also said that she “will make sure that councils have the clarity, the understanding and the consistency so that we have a clear and uniform approach [to the registers] across the country”.⁸¹

75 [Q30](#)

76 [Q38](#)

77 [Q33](#)

78 [Q27](#)

79 [Q31](#)

80 [Q10](#)

81 [Q10](#)

Next steps

64. There are many areas in the Bill for which the detail has not yet been worked out. The National Curriculum is under review, a consultation has been launched by Ofsted on education inspection and a Child Poverty Strategy is expected in the Spring.⁸² In many areas our witnesses told us that the detail of policy was simply not set out in the Bill. The Hansard Society, a charity dedicated to improving the way Parliament works, stated in its report on delegated legislation in 2021 that “[t]oo many Bills are now ‘skeleton’ Bills (or have ‘skeleton’ parts to them) that contain powers rather than policy” in which “the majority of the content is left to be decided at a later date through delegated legislation”. The Hansard Society concluded that legislation of this kind should be of concern to Parliament as “Ministerial action is thus not accompanied by any meaningful parliamentary oversight”.⁸³

65. **CONCLUSION**

We have not had the time or resource to comb through the Bill or take evidence on the delegated powers within it, although we note that the published Delegated Powers Memorandum for the Bill is 75 pages long. We stated at the beginning of this Report that the Bill’s timetable and handling has not allowed us to conduct detailed legislative scrutiny.

66. In this context, we note the Cabinet Office’s Guidance on Making Legislation, which states that: “within three to five years of Royal Assent, the Government will be required to submit a memorandum to the relevant departmental Select Committee with a preliminary assessment of how the act has worked out in practice, to allow the committee to decide whether it wishes to conduct further post-legislative scrutiny”.⁸⁴

82 Department for Education (DfE), Press Release, [Government launches Curriculum and Assessment Review](#), 19 July 2024; DfE, Open consultation, [Improving the way Ofsted inspects education](#), 3 February 2025; [Oral evidence on The Work of the Department for Education, HC 540](#), Wednesday 15 January 2025, Q41

83 Hansard Society, [Delegated legislation: the problems with the process: Introducing the Hansard Society’s Delegated Legislation Review](#), 2021, p. 8

84 Cabinet Office, [Guide to Making Legislation](#), 2022, para. 13.16

67.

CONCLUSION

We have worked at pace on the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill to contribute to fulfil our scrutiny role within the parameters set by the Government’s timetable and increase transparency for the benefit of the House and, we hope, those who will be affected by the legislation. We are particularly grateful to those young adults who gave evidence to us on their lived experience of the care system and have reflected their voices in this Report. We have tested the Bill’s provisions with stakeholders and policy experts and produced this Report with the aim of assisting the House at Report stage and Third Reading.

68.

RECOMMENDATION

We draw the Government’s attention to the New Clauses and amendments tabled in the name of our Chair which seek to offer practical ways to meet the concerns and put into effect the recommendations we have heard in evidence from witnesses.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. We welcome the scale of the Government's ambition in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. We join the Government in wanting to see high and rising standards in our education and care systems to protect vulnerable children and ensure educational opportunity for every child. (Conclusion, Paragraph 2)
2. The Government did not, in this case, publish the Bill in draft. Nonetheless, the Bill's timetable could have factored in time for our Committee to come to a considered view on its contents. Although the Minister for School Standards had written to us of her wish to "work closely" with the Committee, no allowance was made for select committee scrutiny in the Bill's extremely compressed timetable. (Conclusion, Paragraph 7)
3. The Government has neither followed its own guidelines, nor engaged as productively as we would have liked with our Committee over this Bill. The interval between introduction and Second Reading was not long enough for proper preparation by Members of the House. The publication of the Impact Assessment over a month after the Bill was introduced and halfway through the consideration of the Bill in Committee, shows scant regard for the House. The decision not to involve our Committee in pre-legislative scrutiny, or even to give us prior notice of the Bill's publication, has made it more difficult for us to conduct proper scrutiny of the Bill. Had we been involved at an earlier stage, we could have fed our findings into the Bill itself and this process would also have allowed the Government to respond to issues raised by stakeholders in advance of Second Reading. (Conclusion, Paragraph 11)
4. We recommend that the Government undertakes to follow the Cabinet Office Guide to Making Legislation and engage meaningfully, and in a timely way, with select committees as a way of improving policy making and building consensus on important legislation. We further recommend that the Government provide a memorandum to the Liaison Committee demonstrating how it plans to engage with select committees on legislation over the Parliament. (Recommendation, Paragraph 12)

5. We would have liked to dedicate more time to a considered examination of the policy issues in the Bill and the mechanisms by which the Bill seeks to meet its policy aims. However, given the tight timetable the Government has provided for this Bill, and our wish to contribute effectively by proposing changes to the Bill where necessary, we have had to be extremely selective in the parts of the Bill we have examined. We have sought to learn from, and amplify, the voices of the practitioners, families and professionals who will be directly affected by the Bill. (Conclusion, Paragraph 14)
6. Care leavers face a confusing patchwork of entitlements when they leave care. This is made more complex by the differing offers in each local authority and the fact that they are having to navigate this at a young age, often with little or no support. Our witnesses supported the view that a National Care Offer would help with this. (Conclusion, Paragraph 19)
7. Young people in care are significantly more likely to have experienced trauma and adverse experiences than their peers, and therefore strong mental health support is crucial. Although local authorities are required to assess the emotional and mental health of children in their care, evidence suggests this does not always happen in practice. Our witnesses were clear that there is scope to strengthen the requirement for the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the care system to be assessed. (Conclusion, Paragraph 23)
8. Despite the implicit inclusion of children with SEND in the Bill's provisions on breakfast clubs, we consider that express inclusion of the needs of those children on the face of the Bill would be a much stronger safeguard against schools failing—for reasons of cost, convenience and accident—to put in place commonsense measures to ensure that children with SEND have equal access to breakfast clubs. There are also implications for local authorities who fund home to school transport for many children with SEND and who would be required to make transport available on a more flexible basis, potentially at additional cost, to enable children to get to a breakfast club. Strengthening the inclusion requirements of breakfast clubs on the face of the Bill would place the onus on the Department for Education to take account of this requirement when allocating funds for the national roll-out of breakfast clubs and making the case to HM Treasury for those monies in the upcoming Spending Review. (Conclusion, Paragraph 30)
9. We consider that the arguments for auto-enrolment in free school meals for those children currently eligible are conclusive. In the interests of alleviating hunger in schools and improving health and educational outcomes for the poorest children, auto-enrolment must be brought in without delay. (Conclusion, Paragraph 35)

10. We consider that local authorities should draw on the advice of specialist domestic abuse charities in coming to a decision on whether FGDM is in the child's best interests where domestic abuse has occurred. (Conclusion, Paragraph 41)
11. We welcome the additional clarity on teacher pay offered by the Government's new clause and new schedule brought forward at Committee stage. (Conclusion, Paragraph 47)
12. We have not had the time or resource to comb through the Bill or take evidence on the delegated powers within it, although we note that the published Delegated Powers Memorandum for the Bill is 75 pages long. We stated at the beginning of this Report that the Bill's timetable and handling has not allowed us to conduct detailed legislative scrutiny. (Conclusion, Paragraph 65)
13. We have worked at pace on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill to contribute to fulfil our scrutiny role within the parameters set by the Government's timetable and increase transparency for the benefit of the House and, we hope, those who will be affected by the legislation. We are particularly grateful to those young adults who gave evidence to us on their lived experience of the care system and have reflected their voices in this Report. We have tested the Bill's provisions with stakeholders and policy experts and produced this Report with the aim of assisting the House at Report stage and Third Reading. (Conclusion, Paragraph 67)
14. We draw the Government's attention to the New Clauses and amendments tabled in the name of our Chair which seek to offer practical ways to meet the concerns and put into effect the recommendations we have heard in evidence from witnesses. (Recommendation, Paragraph 68)

Formal minutes

Tuesday 25 February

Members present:

Helen Hayes, in the Chair

Jess Asato

Mrs Sureena Brackenridge

Darren Paffey

Manuela Perteghella

Mark Swards

Patrick Spencer

Caroline Voaden

Scrutiny of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Draft Report (*Scrutiny of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 68 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 9.30am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence to the inquiry into Children’s Wellbeing and School Bill (HC 665). Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee’s website.

Tuesday 4 February 2025

Kate Anstey, Head of Education Policy, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG); **Dr Rebecca Montacute**, Head of Research and Policy, Sutton Trust; **Lindsey MacDonald**, CEO, Magic Breakfast [Q1-12](#)

Sam Freedman, Senior Fellow, The Institute for Government; **Daniel Kebede**, General Secretary, National Education Union (NEU); **John Barneby**, CEO, Oasis Community Learning [Q13-24](#)

Thomas Brooke, Joint interim Chief School Adjudicator, Office of the Schools Adjudicator; **Councillor Bev Craig**, Leader, Manchester City Council and Vice Chair, Local Government Association (LGA); **Clare Canning**, Head of Centre, Broadleaf Home Ed Co-operative [Q25-44](#)

The following witnesses gave evidence to the inquiry into Children’s social care (HC 430), which was also relevant to the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee’s website.

Tuesday 21 January 2025

Anna Edmundson, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC); **Lynn Perry MBE**, Chief Executive, Barnardo’s; **Claire Throssell MBE**, Survivor of Domestic Abuse, Public Speaker, Ambassador for Women’s Aid and IDAS [Q353-368](#)

Annie Hudson, Chair, Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel; **Andy Smith**, President, Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS); **Rob Williams**, Senior Policy Advisor, National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) [Q369-383](#)

Tuesday 11 February 2025

Dan Turnbull, Senior Director for Markets, Competition and Markets Authority (CMA); **Mrs Denise Rawls**, Executive Director, The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL); **Mr Sam Turner**, Associate Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Kinship; **Roger Gough**, Children's Services Spokesperson, The County Councils Network (CCN)

[Q384-414](#)

Lamar Mohsen, Care-experienced young person; **Georgia Sullivan**, Care experienced young person; **Louise Fitt**, Care experienced young person; **Jake Hartley**, Care experienced young person

[Q415-430](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence relating to the Children’s Wellbeing and School Bill inquiry (HC 655) was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee’s website.

CWS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1	Broadleaf Home Ed Co-operative	CWS0005
2	Cafcass	CWS0007
3	Confederation of School Trusts (CST)	CWS0006
4	Family Rights Group	CWS0008
5	Jones, Camilla	CWS0001
6	Magic Breakfast	CWS0004
7	Office of the Schools Adjudicator	CWS0003
8	Uniform Direct	CWS0002

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–25

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Appointment of Sir Ian Bauckham CBE as Chief Regulator of the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)	HC 429
2nd Special	Delivering effective financial education: Government Response	HC 628
1st Special	Teacher recruitment, training and retention: Government Response	HC 627