



## Department for Education

Josh MacAlister OBE MP  
Minister for Children and Families

The Lord Alton of Liverpool  
Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights

20 May 2026

Dear Lord Alton,

### **Publication of ‘Delivering the Children’s Social Care Reset’, an implementation plan for local partners, 2026-2029.**

Following the General Election in July 2024, this government set out its commitment to reform children’s social care so that every child can grow up in a loving, safe and secure home. In November 2024, we published [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) which set out an ambitious vision for a transformed system. We are delighted that [the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act](#), which includes the full range of measures set out in that paper, received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026.

Building on this important milestone in the government’s journey to transform children’s social care, we are now publishing *Delivering the Children’s Social Care Reset: an implementation plan for local partners* that sets out how and when the measures within this Act (alongside relevant provisions in the Crime and Policing Act 2026), and activities and actions associated with our wider reform programme will be implemented over the remainder of this Parliament.

The plan is intended to serve as a practical tool for local partners to help them plan, prepare and sequence reforms, and provides indicative timelines for: commencing measures in these new Acts, introducing regulations, updating or publishing guidance to support delivery, and related consultations. The plan is structured in two parts which are summarised at Annex A.

During this parliament, we are supporting transformation with significant investment, including £2.4 billion over this multi-year settlement for [the Families First Partnership programme](#). With the leadership of local partners and guided by individuals with direct experience of children’s social care, we are also initiating and scaling transformation through a range of programmes, including Kinship Zones, Fostering Hubs, Regional Care Cooperatives and Single Unique Identifier pilots.

Our reforms establish a strong foundation for prioritising early and intensive family help, strengthening child protection practice, supporting families to remain safely together, and ensuring residential care is used purposefully. The success of reform will depend on clear direction, sustained and well-aligned partnership working, a steadfast commitment to prevention, and regular monitoring of the impact of actions taken.

Delivering the most significant reform of children's social care services in a generation will continue to be challenging, but it presents a vital opportunity to deliver lasting change for children and families across England, and to think about this in the context of children's rights.

I look forward to attending your committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June to discuss the Human Rights of Children in the Social Care System in England.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh MacAlister". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Josh MacAlister OBE MP**  
**Minister for Children and Families**

## Annex: A brief summary of ‘Delivering the Children’s Social Care Reset: an implementation plan for local partners’

**Part one of the plan is focussed on ‘Implementation’ and sets out a national package to support reform, bringing together investment, accountability, targeted improvement and intervention support, and how reform will be supported by a stronger use of evidence, data and digital infrastructure.**

- Alongside providing significant investment to deliver reform, we are better distributing investment in a way that accounts for need and deprivation through [the new Children’s Formula](#), consolidating small grants into the Local Government Finance Settlement and simplifying the funding landscape.
- Ofsted plans to update [The Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services Framework](#) and [The Social Care Common Inspection Framework](#) to align with the goals of reform.
- During the next phase of reform, we will be working in partnership with sector experts to deliver a fully integrated support offer to local partners to improve performance and act decisively where services fall short for children and families, including through CSC Improvement Teams, Expert Advisors and National Facilitators.
- To continue to put evidence at the heart of what we do, we will commission Foundations to create additional practice guides that provide actionable recommendations to support local leaders in strengthening family services and provide funding to Foundations to lead a programme of work entitled ‘Evidence into Practice Programme’ to embed evidence in local service design and delivery.
- We will publish a Family Justice strategy to drive earlier resolutions for children, reduce demand and delays, and support families and court users.
- We will develop the Children’s Social Care Dashboard to provide clear, accessible indicators of progress, test how data can be collected, shared and used through the children’s social care private dashboard early adopters scheme, and pilot a Single Unique Identifier for every child.

**Part two of the plan sets out the next phase of reform through four delivery programmes, each with clear actions and milestones.**

- **Families First** - this programme covers the work we are leading in partnership to support safeguarding partners to implement Family Help and multi-agency child protection reforms and increase support for family networks. As we progress with the next phase of reform, we set out intentions to embed the Families First Partnership programme, and to incrementally implement new statutory duties associated with the programme, including Family Group Decision Making (from Summer 2026) and the establishment of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (during 2027, subject to consultation). We also set out that we will be expanding kinship support nationally by implementing new duties on local authorities to publish kinship local offers (Summer 2026), and expanding support through Kinship Zones. And lastly, we set out how we will further strengthen the child protection system to provide an accurate and decisive child protection response when children face significant harm, both inside and outside the home, including through implementing new information sharing duties, responding to the consultation on the Child Protection Authority, and introducing mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse (Spring 2027).

- **Enduring Relationships** - this programme focuses on children in care and care leavers, and sets out the vital role of all children having enduring relationships. In the plan we set out intentions to expand foster care capacity from 2026, including by increasing support and financial stability for carers and simplifying fostering standards (Autumn 2026) to ensure more high-quality placements. Alongside this, we set out that we will scale Regional Care Cooperatives (from Spring 2026 onwards) to support the delivery of homes, stronger commissioning, and better forecasting of high-quality placements for children in care. This work will also be supported by enhanced financial oversight of the children's homes market, the first ever provider oversight scheme of provider groups of children's homes, capital investment to build homes for children in the right areas of the country, and a tighter regulation of unregistered homes. Lastly, we also set out that care leavers will continue to benefit from support through Staying Put, Staying Close which will become a national offer in 2028, and that new corporate parenting responsibilities for HMG Departments and relevant public bodies will commence in Autumn 2027.
- **Adoption support** - this programme sets out our approach to supporting children who are adopted, and families who adopt children. As we progress with reform, we set out through the plan that we are continuing to provide therapeutic support through the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund from Spring 2026 while consulting on the long-term future of the fund, and introducing a new universal parenting offer to support children transitioning to secondary school (Autumn 2026). We also set out that Adoption England will support local authorities (and Regional Adoption Agencies) to improve adoption practice from Spring 2026. In parallel, Ofsted will carry out a thematic review of Regional Adoption Agencies and publish findings in Spring 2027, and we will strengthen adoption record retention by legislating for a consistent 100-year standard from Spring 2027.
- **Supporting the whole workforce** - this programme focuses on the children's social care workforce, including social workers and the children's homes workforce. The plan sets out a range of actions, including that we will enhance training and standards for children's homes staff (from Spring 2026), streamline Ofsted registration for children's home managers, and invest in early career development for social workers. Additionally, we will strengthen professional development for social workers by working in partnership with local authorities to embed a new offer underpinned by clear standards, and strengthen regulation on agency workers (from Spring 2028) to promote more stable, relationship-based practice.