



Department
for Education

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Policy paper

2010 to 2015 government policy: children's social workers

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This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to

2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government.

The previous URL of this page was

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-social-workers-to-provide-help-and-protection-to-children>. Current policies can be found at the GOV.UK [policies list](#).

Issue

In the year 2012 to 2013, just under 600,000 children in England were referred to local authority children's social care services because of concerns about their welfare. It is the role of social workers to lead the assessment of the needs of these children and make sure effective action is taken quickly to protect them from harm.

We believe children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually and are able to work together in the interest of vulnerable children.

We are committed to raising the quality of social workers and clarifying their responsibilities in helping children. We also need to make sure social workers can exercise their professional judgement in the best interests of vulnerable children.

Actions

To make our child protection system more effective and improve the quality of the social work profession, we are:

- enforcing revised [statutory guidance](#) which clarifies the responsibilities of

different professionals in promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from harm

- making sure that local authorities whose child protection services are judged not good enough by Ofsted improve immediately
- continuing to reform the system of [serious case reviews \(SCRs\)](#) so social workers are able to learn the lessons from serious child protection incidents and improve future services
- attracting high-quality graduates who want to enter social work through the [Step Up to Social Work](#) scheme and the [Frontline pilot](#)
- introducing [regulations](#) so local authorities can delegate some of their work to private or voluntary organisations on a not-for-profit basis - they can delegate functions related to:
 - support for looked-after children
 - child protection
 - early interventions to give vulnerable children a better chance of staying with their families rather than going into care

Background

In 2011, Professor Eileen Munro ran an [independent review of the child protection system](#). As a result, we:

- revised [statutory guidance](#) on safeguarding children aimed at schools and local authorities in March 2013
- established a [national panel of independent experts](#) that is providing advice to local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) about how to apply SCR criteria and the requirement to publish reports
- appointed [Isabelle Trowler](#) as the Chief Child and Family Social Worker - she is in charge of reporting on how effective professionals are at helping children and families and she advises on good social work practice

These changes were implemented with the publication of [‘Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children’](#) in March 2013.

From December 2009 to March 2012, we ran [social work pilots](#), which looked into the effects of allowing local authorities to delegate services for looked-after children to independent providers. A total of 15 local authorities participated in the pilot.

As a result of the pilots, we changed the law on 12 November 2013 to give all local authorities in England the freedom to delegate their functions relating to looked-after children and care leavers to independent organisations.

In February 2013, Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove asked Sir Martin Narey to conduct an independent review of the education of children’s social workers. We published Sir Martin’s report in February 2014. The [report](#) gives 18 recommendations on how we can make the education of social workers more consistently effective.

In line with the recommendations from the Narey review, Chief Social Worker Isabelle Trowler produced the [knowledge and skills statement](#) on 31 July 2014. It sets out everything a child and family social worker needs to know at the end of their first year in practice.

Who we’ve consulted

The [‘Consultation on revised safeguarding statutory guidance’](#) ran from 12 June to 4 September 2012. It sought views on 3 statutory documents from LSCBs, local authorities, schools, social workers, and the voluntary and community sector, among others. As part of the consultation, we considered messages from children about the safeguarding and child

protection system provided to us by the Children's Commissioner and the Office of the Children's Rights Director. The consultation received over 460 responses.

On 17 April 2014 we launched a [consultation](#) on proposals to allow local authority children's social care departments to delegate some of their functions to third-party providers. The consultation closed on 30 May 2014.

From 31 July to 9 October 2014, we ran a [consultation on the on the skills and knowledge statement](#). The statement:

- sets out what a child and family social worker needs to know at the end of their first year in practice
- informs the teaching content of qualifying programmes so they prepare students to become effective child and family social workers

Bills and legislation

Legislation about child protection is covered in:

- [Local Authority Social Services Act 1970](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

Who we're working with

We are working with the [Association of Directors of Children's Services](#), the [Local Government Association](#) and the [Society of Local Authority](#)

[Chief Executives \(Solace\)](#) on reforms to the child safeguarding system.

We are working with the same organisations, as well as the [Association of Independent Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards](#), on [reforms to the SCR system](#).

We are also working with [Skills for Care](#) to help employers introduce ASYE into their organisation.

Appendix 1: serious case reviews (SCRs)

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

When a child dies from abuse or neglect, the local inter-agency group responsible for child protection conducts a review to identify how local professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together.



Serious case reviews (SCRs) are undertaken by local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) for every case where abuse or neglect is known - or suspected - and either:

- a child dies
- a child is seriously harmed and there are concerns about how organisations or professionals worked together to protect the child



Publication of SCR overview reports

The revised statutory guidance ['Working together to safeguard children'](#) makes clear that a case that meets the criteria must trigger an SCR, and that the LSCB should aim to complete this within 6 months. It should result in a report which is published and readily available. Where the criteria are

not met, the LSCB may still wish to review and share instances of good practice.

Appendix 2: Step Up to Social Work

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Step Up to Social Work is a programme which enables trainees to work towards a qualification to practise as a social worker at the same time as gaining intensive hands-on experience.

It has been designed to enable high-achieving graduates or career changers who have experience of working with children and young people to train to become qualified social workers.

More [information about the Step Up to Social Work programme](#) is available.

Appendix 3: assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

The assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) is designed to help newly qualified social workers develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence. It provides them with access to regular support during their first year of employment.

The ASYE is open to all newly qualified social workers in councils and in the private and voluntary sectors. It is based on the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social work and includes the possibility of certification by the College of Social Work.

The ASYE was recommended by the Social Work Task Force. It was introduced in September 2012 and replaces all former arrangements for newly qualified social workers.

You can find more information about the ASYE from the [Skills for Care website](#).

Organisations providing the ASYE

Organisations who have registered to provide the ASYE programme can claim £2,000 for each participant.

Voluntary and private sector organisations can [register to provide the ASYE](#).

Registered organisations who are looking for advice or who wish to claim their funding should use the [social work portal](#).

Contact us if you have any questions about the ASYE.



Social work reform team

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