



Department  
for Education

# National fostering stocktake

A review of the fostering system in England

**Independent call for evidence**

**Launch date 21 April 2017**

**Respond by 16 June 2017**

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# 1. Introduction

Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers have been appointed by the Secretary of State for Education to conduct a National Fostering Stocktake. As a first step, they are seeking views on the current state of foster care in England and how the prospects of children in care might be improved through changes to fostering. They are anxious not to limit responses, ideas or subsequent discussion in any way and welcome views from anyone including, most particularly, children in care and children and adults previously in care, and past and current foster carers.

## Who this is for

- Children and young people
- Parents
- Carers
- Local authorities
- Social workers
- Independent fostering agencies
- Voluntary fostering agencies
- Commissioners
- Representatives across the fostering and care sectors
- Academics
- Organisations providing support and services for children and young people

## Issue date

The call for evidence was issued on 21 April 2017.

## Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the call for evidence, you can contact the team by email at: [Stocktake.FOSTERING@education.gov.uk](mailto:Stocktake.FOSTERING@education.gov.uk)

If your enquiry is related to the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email:

[consultation.unit@education.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@education.gov.uk), by telephone on 0370 000 2288, or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

## Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

## Plans for publishing the results

The evidence submitted through this call for evidence will be used to inform the wider Fostering Stocktake. A report on the findings of the stocktake will be [published on GOV.UK](#) by the end of 2017.

Information provided in response to this call for evidence, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential, please include this in the subject line and explain in your submission why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department for Education will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

## 2. About the call for evidence

The Secretary of State for Education announced the government's intention to review the fostering system in *'Putting Children First'* in July 2016. Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers have been appointed as external and independent reviewers to lead the Stocktake.

Sir Martin Narey is a former head of the prison service and was chief executive of Barnardo's from 2015-2011. Since 2011, he has advised the government on adoption and the reform of social work education (in 2014). In 2016, he completed an independent review of residential children's homes and has significant experience of leading national reform programmes across the social care system.

Sir Martin will be supported by Mark Owers. Mark is a children and families social worker who has spent the last 10 years in the public, voluntary and private sector helping to improve children's social care and youth justice in England. He has significant experience in leading national reviews of public services having spent 3 years in the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit and Cabinet Office.

The aim of this review is to build a comprehensive picture of what the fostering system looks like in England and where and how it could be improved to achieve ambitious outcomes for children. The review will help us to improve our understanding of current provision and how placements are made, where the system works well and what can be learned nationally from good practice.

The reviewers intend to explore the following:

- The types of fostering that are currently provided, in order to understand the full range of provision which is available and when and for which young people it is best used.
- What works best within fostering settings to improve outcomes for the children and young people placed.
- What improvements could be made to the way that fostering provision is commissioned, delivered, regulated and inspected to improve outcomes and value for money.
- The status, role and function of foster carers in relation to other professionals as part of the team working with a child in care.
- How the experiences of young people can be improved when entering foster care, transitioning between placements (between carers or into other settings), and leaving foster care.
- Any other issues which might contribute to better outcomes for children

There are 51,850 children in foster placements in England<sup>1</sup>. The reviewers would like to recognise the immense dedication of carers and professionals involved in the foster system. The reviewers would like to hear from practitioners, academics, foster carers and children in care and children and adults who have left care about what might be done to make fostering more effective in meeting the needs of the children.

The Stocktake is due to conclude in December 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> [SFR241/2016. Children looked after in England including adoption: 2015 to 2016](#)

## 3. How to respond

### Respond online

Please send responses to [Stocktake.FOSTERING@education.gov.uk](mailto:Stocktake.FOSTERING@education.gov.uk).

That will enable officials supporting Sir Martin and Mr Owers to log and record responses and ensure no response is overlooked. If, for any reason, an individual would like to contact the reviewers personally, they may use the following email addresses:

[sirmartinnarey@gmail.com](mailto:sirmartinnarey@gmail.com)

[markowers@yahoo.com](mailto:markowers@yahoo.com)

Please note that this email address should only be used for the purposes of this call for evidence. Any correspondence received after the deadline or relating to other material will be disregarded.

If a report is already in the public domain and the authors wish it to be considered, they should provide the relevant link and a brief summary of the most important points rather than submitting the whole document.

### Other ways to respond

If you are unable to send us your views by email, you can submit your response by post to:

Jenny Briggs  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Children in Care Division  
Great Smith Street  
London, SW1P 3BT

### Deadline

The call for evidence closes on 16 June 2017 at 5pm.



Department  
for Education

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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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