



# Care Matters: Time to deliver for children in care

An implementation plan



department for  
**children, schools and families**



HM Government

---

**ADCS**  
Leading Children's Services



*Local Government Association*

# Care Matters: Time to deliver for children in care

## An implementation plan

# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Joint foreword</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Part 1: The national framework for change</b>                                      | <b>5</b>  |
| A: Our shared vision for achieving better outcomes                                    | 7         |
| B: The performance framework  | 18        |
| C: Changes to legislation and guidance  | 20        |
| <b>Part 2: Delivering change locally: the challenge for Children’s Trust partners</b> | <b>25</b> |
| A: Systematic planning for change   | 27        |
| B: Sector-led improvement   | 35        |
| C: Tool and resources   | 39        |
| <b>Part 3: Monitoring and evaluating progress</b>                                     | <b>45</b> |



# Joint foreword

*Our aspirations for children in care<sup>1</sup> are no less than those each parent has for their own children. Children in care are often in much greater need than other children but much less likely to get the help they require. We aim to create a care system that provides every child with a safe, happy, healthy, secure and loving childhood, nurturing their aspirations and enabling them to fulfil their potential.*

Since the *Care Matters* white paper was launched in June 2007, following widespread consultation and debate, much has happened to move us towards this goal. *The Children's Plan*, published in December 2007, set out the Government's ambitions for all children and young people and we saw the introduction of the Children and Young Persons Bill in Parliament in November 2007. At local level, many partners have already started reviewing their services and drawing up action plans. What's more, thanks to colleagues at both local and national levels, pilots of some of the most ambitious ideas in the white paper are already underway: Virtual School Heads are being piloted in 11 local areas and 1,100 young people are making the most of the 'Right2BCared4', having more say in when it is right for them to leave care.

This implementation plan, which the Government is publishing jointly with the Children's Inter-Agency Group, marks a new phase in the *Care Matters* programme – a shift from developing policy nationally to delivering change locally. Its purpose is to support local Children's Trusts, led by Lead Members and Directors of Children's Services, to transform outcomes for children and young people in care. It aims to do this by setting an ambitious but achievable vision; providing tools and resources to assist delivery; and, most importantly, enabling those working in the sector to lead its improvement. Improving the lives of children in care must involve all local partners and professionals including local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, foster carers, residential care workers, social workers, GPs and other health care practitioners and teachers. To really make the difference we all have to work harder to listen and learn from each other, to transfer our good ideas, skills and knowledge and always to seek out and listen to the voices of children and young people in care themselves.

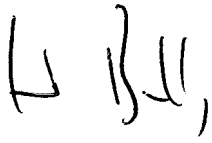
Listening to the unique voice of every child in care is the only way we will be able to keep their individual and distinct needs in mind at every point. Our challenge is to make the structural and systemic changes needed whilst, at the same time, doing the sometimes quite simple things that are so important to children. In this implementation plan we have included examples of these things, building on what children say they want. Also, to highlight the individuality and creativity of our young people, we have added photographs and poetry which show their very real talents and potential. It is our moral and professional responsibility to nurture this potential and enable it to flourish.

Over the next year, we will be hosting a series of regional events to keep up the momentum for radical change, ensure aspirations for children in care remain high, and encourage people to share experiences and successes. Our national stocktakes, the first of which will take place in 2009, will give us the opportunity to evaluate progress and ensure we are on track to deliver our aims.

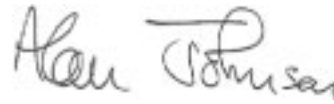
---

<sup>1</sup> This plan uses the term 'children in care' to include all children being looked after by a local authority, including those subject to a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 and those looked after on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents under section 20 of that Act.

We hope this implementation plan is useful to you and we look forward to working together to support the work you are taking forward to deliver real improvement for every single child in care.



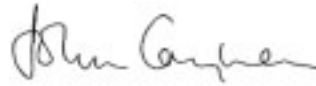
**The Rt Hon Ed Balls MP**, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families



**The Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP**, Secretary of State for Health



**The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP**, Secretary of State for Communities, and Local Government



**John Coughlan**, Chair of the Children's Inter-Agency Group and Joint President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services



**Cllr Les Lawrence**, Chair of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People's Board

## SPOTLIGHT

### Who's on the Children's Inter-Agency Group?

**Association of Chief Police Officers**  
**Association of Directors of Children's Services**  
**National Children's Bureau**  
**Local Government Association)**  
**NSPCC**  
**The National Youth Association**  
**Barnardo's**  
**NHS Confederation**  
**The Children's Society**  
**National Council Of Voluntary Child Care Organisations**  
**SOLACE**  
**Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health**  
**National Children's Homes**  
**Fostering Network**  
**National Council for Voluntary Youth Services**

# Introduction

- i. We are committed to making this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. The creation of the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the publication of *The Children's Plan*<sup>2</sup> by the first Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, signals the Government's commitment to prioritising the well-being of all children and young people and narrowing the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and their peers. Improving outcomes for children in care is an important part of this agenda. As the *Care Matters* white paper made clear, what we achieve for children in care is an important test of what we are achieving for all children. Narrowing the gap between children in care and all children requires us to do much better for this most vulnerable group in both mainstream services, such as schools, colleges and health services, and in those tailored to their specific needs.
- ii. This is a shared agenda. We want to pool our experience, resources and influence to support local improvement. Local partners are in the driving seat, facing the biggest challenge, but also having the greatest potential for making a difference. Lead Members for Children's Services and Directors of Children's Services have a crucial role to play in terms of leading local change. However, real change for children in care can only be achieved with the active involvement of a wide range of local partners. In particular, change needs Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), GP practices, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), schools, further education colleges, the police, youth justice organisations and the third and private sector to play their part. Radical change will not be achieved immediately. Sustained action is needed over the long term by all these organisations and the individuals who work within them if we are to collectively transform both the care system and the life chances of those children and young people who depend on it. We know that it can be very difficult to improve outcomes for this group of children, but together we can and must do better.
- iii. The Government has already provided significant extra resources through a change fund for local authorities and to start some of the pilots announced in *Care Matters*. A further £280 million has been made available over the spending review period 2007–11 to support delivery of the *Care Matters* agenda and help make better use of the existing £2 billion plus which is spent on children in care each year. This implementation plan has been produced to support local partners to use this money well and to make our shared vision for children in care a reality. It is not a traditional action plan in that it does not provide an exhaustive list of all the work being taken forward at national level to deliver on the *Care Matters* agenda<sup>3</sup>. Instead, it is intended to act as a guide for local partners to help promote delivery of that agenda at local level.
- iv. The implementation plan is structured in three parts: **Part 1 focuses on the national framework for change for children in care**, setting a clear direction for improvement, outlining how the performance management framework will support this and explaining the changes being made to legislation and guidance to promote better service delivery. **Part 2 guides Children's Trust partners in implementing change locally**, encouraging systematic planning and improvement led by local agencies and professionals, as well as listing the tools, resources and support available to assist delivery. Finally, **Part 3 explains how we will monitor and evaluate progress**, via feedback from children and young people, input from

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Children's Plan* is available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan)

<sup>3</sup> A full list of how the *Care Matters* commitments are being taken forward will be made available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Ofsted, analysis of data and the evaluation of the various pilots taking place over the next few years, and bring all this together in the annual national stocktake.

## TOP TIPS

### Children say it's the little things that often mean the most!

In this document, we set out some of the key messages which children and young people identify are important to their daily experience of care. The tips below, together with these messages, should act as a prompt for local partners to have a discussion with the children in care in their areas about some of the simple things that can be done quickly to improve their experience whilst in care.

#### Passports

Children in care shouldn't miss out on school trips simply because they don't have a passport. Make sure all your carers know the process for getting a child a passport and who needs to sign. Make it simple! The website of the Identity and Passport Service includes information about passport applications for children in care ([www.ips.gov.uk/passport/apply-child-care.asp](http://www.ips.gov.uk/passport/apply-child-care.asp)).

#### School photos

Set money aside for school photos. These are an important record of a child's life and development and will help them to build a history. As one child said, "it was when my carers put my school photo up on the mantelpiece that I knew I belonged".

#### Photo albums

Do all your children in care have a photo album for their school photos and any other photos of people or events which are important to them?

#### Poem: Alone

Alone, in a room dark and empty,  
No voice or noise to be heard.  
Not even a heartbeat can I feel  
Just me all alone in this room,  
In the dark with nothing to see  
All I do when my head hits the pillow  
Is lie awake and think about the past  
And say, if I wasn't born  
Would the world be  
The way it is now, or not?  
Has the world turned angry and upset  
Because I am in it?  
Or is it just the way life is meant to be?  
Empty and lonely all the time, with a river of tears,  
I'm no-one special, but I do want you to know  
How lonely life is when no-one is by your side  
You read these feelings and you will find out  
I'm all alone with no-one standing by my side  
I'm all alone, is this how life is meant to be for us?  
If so, why do I feel the feelings are only moving around me?

**Chantelle**



PART 1

# The national framework for change

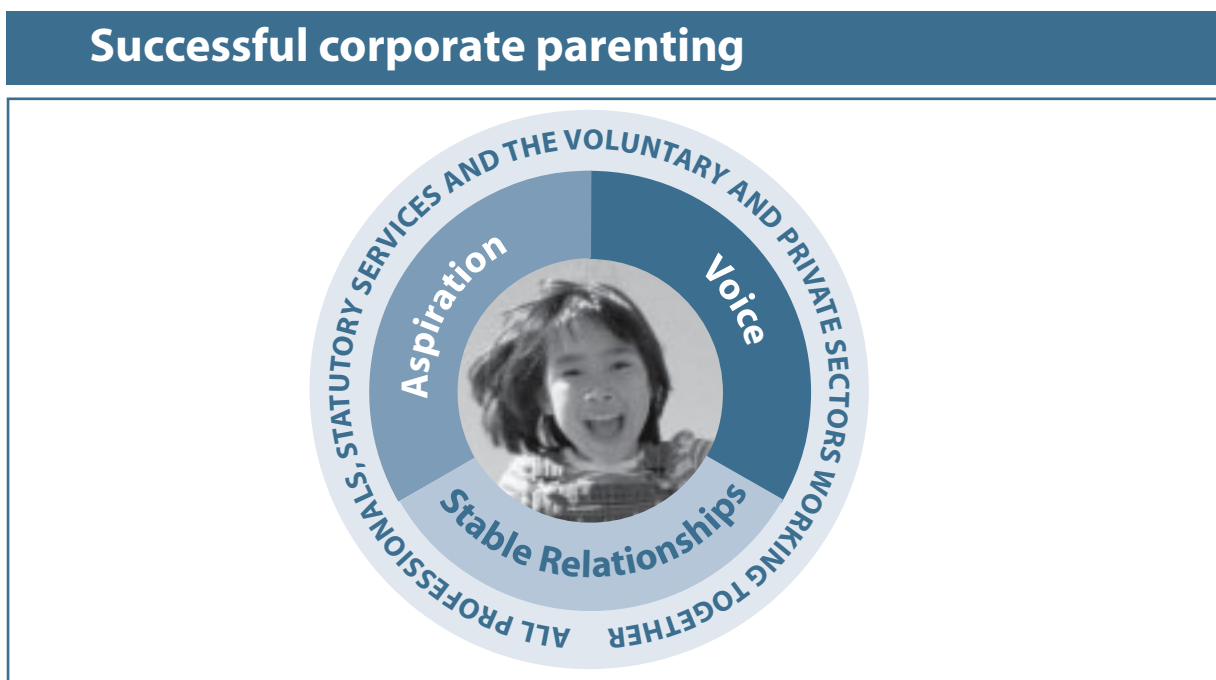




## SECTION A:

# Our shared vision for achieving better outcomes

- 1.1 The aim of the *Care Matters* agenda is to secure improved and sustainable outcomes for children in care and their families. This is critical for the individual children concerned and will also contribute to social and economic regeneration and the cohesion of communities. We recognise the depth of this challenge. Working together to enable every child in care to achieve their full potential can be hard, especially where children have very difficult histories, but there is evidence all around the country that it can be done.
- 1.2 As the *Care Matters* white paper acknowledged, it is important that local partners provide effective family support to enable children to remain at home where appropriate. Where children do need to come into the care of the state, delivering good outcomes requires **excellent corporate parenting** based on **high aspirations, stable relationships** and taking time to listen to the **voice** of the child.



- 1.3 Every child needs a good parent who looks out for them, speaks out on their behalf and responds to their needs. For children in care, this is a statutory role for local authorities – all local councillors and council officers share the corporate parenting responsibility. This responsibility is paramount and councillors and council officers should carry it with them as they go about their daily business. They should also be clear about how, as corporate parents, they work with and support the Lead Member and Director of Children’s Services, in their strategic roles.
- 1.4 However, it is not just local authorities that have a parenting role. In the same way that a family shares responsibility for bringing up their children with their extended family members, the corporate parenting responsibility must be shared by everyone involved in supporting children in care. This includes health bodies, education services such as schools and colleges, the police, youth and youth justice organisations, and the private and third sectors too. The responses to

the *Care Matters* green and white papers emphasised that unless this wide range of partners accept their responsibilities, we will not make a difference to the lives of children in care.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Topping up Child Trust Funds

The Government will be topping up Child Trust Fund accounts by £100 for every year a child spends in care from 1 April 2007. We will shortly be issuing statutory guidance which will set out the processes local authorities will need to follow to administer the scheme.

## Voice

- 1.5** Every partner in the Children's Trust needs to listen to children in care. It is only by listening to children and young people that you know what changes need to be made and, often, it is only by working with and responding to children and young people that you can make those changes happen.
- 1.6** The voice of children and young people must be heard first in relation to their own care plan and review, in line with the local authority's duty under the Children Act 1989 to ascertain and take into account the child's wishes and feelings. The **Independent Reviewing Officer** (IRO) is key to ensuring children and young people can express their views. As a result of the Children and Young Persons Bill (see Part 1: Section C for details), local authorities will in future be required to appoint a named IRO for each child who will be required to spend time with that child prior to any review so that they personally establish the child's wishes and feelings. Where children and young people have communication difficulties or complex needs or both, IROs will be required either to have the skills necessary to elicit their views effectively or to have access to specialist input from someone who does. Advocacy also has an important role to play in ensuring children's voices are heard and their rights protected, especially where they intend to make a complaint.
- 1.7** As good corporate parents, all professionals should make it their business to know their children in care. Children and young people often say that what they want most is to feel 'normal'. Day to day, professionals need to find out what, if anything, is stopping the children they work with from feeling 'normal' and take action as a result. Are they worried about contact with a sibling? Has anyone bought their school photograph? Do they have a meaningful record of their personal history? Are they getting the opportunities they need to explore and express their interests and talents?

## SPOTLIGHT

**Right2Bcared4 pilots**

The Right2Bcared4 pilots are exploring ways in which young people aged between 16 and 18 can become more involved in decisions which involve significant changes to their care, so that they do not feel forced to leave stable placements. As part of these pilots, young people are able to nominate an independent person to help them make their wishes and feelings known and to help them fully understand the full implications of any decision they make.

This pilot will allow us to test whether or not young people have a particular preference in choosing an advocate and how far advocacy contributes to improved outcomes and the quality of young people's engagement in their care planning. Findings from this pilot will inform how the Right2BCared4 lessons are rolled out nationally in 2010 and be helpful in providing evidence of the value of advocacy in the care planning and review process.

## MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

**“Help me meet other children and young people in care”**

Sometimes it's good to meet people who understand my situation and how I feel. Whether I am in foster care or residential care, I would like the chance to join an in-care group so I can meet other young people like me.

- 1.8** Better outcomes for children in and leaving care often come about when they are empowered to act positively and effect change in their own lives. The Pledge, or as young people preferred to call it 'the promise', should be developed as a key communication tool in partnership with children and young people. Crucial to the success of the Pledge is that it reflects the perception of children and young people about the parenting they need. Every child and young person's care or pathway plan must reflect how the commitments made in the Pledge will be delivered for that individual child. In addition, all local areas need a Children in Care Council to enable regular, good quality dialogue and involvement in developing and delivering services. There should also be mechanisms in place for involving young people in care in the recruitment of key staff members.

## CASE STUDY

### Warwickshire and the Pledge

What Makes The Difference<sup>4</sup> has been supporting Warwickshire County Council to develop a Pledge to all of the children and young people in the county who are in or leaving care. The work on their Pledge began in August 2007 involving elected members, officers and children and young people. Particular consideration was given to how everyone could work together on an equal footing and without children and young people being disempowered by the process.

In December 2007 the first joint meeting of members, children and young people and officers took place. Attendees discussed ideas for the Pledge and began a process of prioritising them. This work was taken forward to a second meeting in February 2008 to begin the process of writing a first draft of the Pledge.

Of particular importance to Warwickshire's approach was the commitment to incorporating the Pledge as part of care and pathway planning for children and young people. The Pledge will be reflected in the plan for the child or young person and will empower them and the person working most closely with them to be able to make decisions without recourse to others. In addition, a Children in Care Council has been created to monitor and evaluate in the long term both the Pledge and other aspects of services provided. This will ensure that the Pledge is a functional tool for the improvement of services and outcomes for children in care and care leavers rather than simply a document to be framed and placed on a wall.

## Stable relationships

### MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

#### **"Let me keep in touch with my last carer"**

If I move, I want to stay in touch with my last placement – with my carer and with other young people fostered with me. I also want to stay in touch with my family and friends.

- 1.9** The capacity to form and maintain healthy social relationships begins in early childhood as a dependent baby's needs are met through the consistent and constant care from an adult. Developing strong attachments is key for every child, especially children in care. It is the foundation for healthy and strong emotional relationships. For most children this comes from good parents, but that is not always the case. Replicating the continuity and quality of relationships that comes from good parenting is absolutely key to supporting the well-being of children in care.

<sup>4</sup> This project is funded through the European Social Fund EQUAL initiative with Rainer as lead partner.

- 1.10** The most important relationship for almost all children, whether in care or not, is with their **family members: parents and siblings**. Indeed, most children only remain in care for a short time. The primary aim for all children in care is try to settle them back with their parents where this is appropriate. Nurturing relationships with family members is, therefore, essential.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Supporting children on the edge of care

The *Care Matters* white paper outlined the range of activities the Government is taking forward to support children on the edge of care, including:

- encouraging local authorities to analyse and manage their care populations more effectively;
- improving parenting support including through the National Academy for Parenting Practitioners (NAPP);
- piloting Multi-Systemic Therapy as an effective intensive and specialist intervention for older children and young people on the edge of care;
- establishing a new Family Drug and Alcohol Court in Wells Street, London, designed to improve the engagement of adults in treatment services and increase their capacity to provide stable care for their children;
- introducing a new framework for family and friends care; and
- developing support care programmes to help families who are having difficulties and enable children to remain living at home.

- 1.11** Supporting relationships with family members is just as important where children are likely to remain in care in the long term. Whatever the reason for not living with their family, most children want to maintain those links, and local authorities are legally required to promote contact. We want to ensure that each child's views on who they do and don't want to have contact with are heard. Children tell us that being separated from brothers and sisters can be one of the worst parts of being in care and local partners need to do more to support these relationships where they are in the child's best interests.
- 1.12** As well as strong attachments to family members, **foster carers or residential care workers** are really important for children in care, as these are the people who have the most impact on their day-to-day experiences. Where these attachments are good, we know that children are happier and have better outcomes. Children in care need foster carers and residential workers with warmth and commitment who provide a supportive and predictable routine. The best carers understand children, rewarding good behaviours and modelling more appropriate approaches where necessary<sup>5</sup>. The quality of care provided has a crucial effect not just on stability of relationships but also on health, well-being and education. Foster carers and residential care workers need to be empowered to enable children in care to make good choices about their health and well-being and education, including ensuring they have positive friendships. We will not be successful in improving outcomes for children in care unless they get

<sup>5</sup> Morgan R *Children's messages on care – A report by the Children's Rights Director for England, 2007*, London: OFSTED; WMTD/Rainer *Interviews with young people on their views of being parented in the care system, 2007*: WMTD/Rainer.

this active engagement from their foster carers and residential care workers that other children receive from their parents.

- 1.13** This means there must be much better training and support for foster carers, in line with the Foster Care Training, Support and Development Standards developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council. We will be supporting the national roll-out of the Fostering Changes programme which provides skills-based training to develop foster carers' capacity to use positive parenting to respond to difficult and challenging child behaviour. At the same time, we want to ensure that children's residential homes provide good quality care with well-trained staff able to support children in their development and enable them to move on where that is appropriate.

## CASE STUDY

### Supporting foster carers

As part of the south west regional Healthy Care Programme, a group of foster carers worked with Myrtle Theatre Company to ensure that carers have a voice in saying what support they need to promote the mental health and emotional well-being of children in their care. Their theatre production was shown at the regional and national CAMHS Conferences, and is being shown to the North Somerset Children's Board as they develop child focused supportive care systems. Carers' interests will be taken forward in imaginative, interactive training methods that can be fun and provide carers with stimulating peer-led professional development. A carer said of her theatre workshops "we learned it's not about acting and dressing up in funny clothes – it's about a much more powerful way of putting a message across about what young people need and what we need to make sure they get it".

## SPOTLIGHT

### Staying Put: 18+ Family Placement pilots

From 2008 to 2011, the Government will be making available £1.5 million per annum to enable local authorities to pilot ways of enabling young people to remain with their foster carers. Young people aged 18 and over who remain with former foster carers are legally adults and therefore no longer 'in care'. However, we wish to support arrangements that allow young people to remain living with their former foster carers after they turn 18. This will mean that they can move on at a time of their choosing with the right support, just like other young people.

The pilots will enable us to understand the possible practical and financial barriers that could arise. These might include issues relating to the tax status of those caring for care leavers and the number of fostering placements available locally to meet the needs of younger children entering care. The pilot period will allow us to develop practical solutions to overcome these kinds of problems. An invitation to tender for pilot authorities was issued in February 2008.



## SPOTLIGHT

## Social Pedagogy pilots

Social pedagogy provides a theoretical and practical framework for understanding children's upbringing. It has a particular focus on building relationships through practical engagement with children and young people using skills such as art and music or outdoor activities. In a residential care setting it provides a particular expertise in working with groups and using the group as a support.

We will be inviting tenders in 2008 for a contract to design and implement pilots to assess the value of a social pedagogic approach in residential children's homes in England.

The pilots will run between 2008 and 2011. The outcome of the pilots will help to inform the Government's decisions about whether/how to encourage wider use of a pedagogic approach in residential children's homes in England.

- 1.14** Children and young people often say that they want better and more consistent relationships with the professionals who work with them. Far more than other children, children in care have to relate to a wide range of different professionals and learn to deal with different people coming in and out of their lives.
- 1.15** Each partner organisation should consider the quality of relationships it offers children in care and explore where improvements might be made. Every professional needs to be reliable, responsive and honest with the children they support. They also need to ensure that children are clear about the role they play and responsibilities they carry. Children tell us that they don't want to have to build strong relationships with every person in the professional network and they don't necessarily want to have to attend review meetings with 14 people sitting around the table. They want to be able to choose who they relate to and who they trust, and rely on that person to act as lead professional communicating on their behalf with the other professionals involved – as parents generally do for their children.
- 1.16** To play their part, **social workers**, who will normally be the lead professional, need to have manageable case loads that allow them to invest time in building relationships with children, access to opportunities for continuing professional development and supportive individual and group supervision.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Supporting social workers

The Government will soon publish a Children’s Workforce Action Plan which follows on from *Care Matters* and *The Children’s Plan*. This will set out proposals for:

- piloting a newly qualified social worker status in children’s services – giving social workers additional supervision whilst they develop confidence in their role as well as providing a guaranteed year of induction support and appraisal to promote quality standards;
- piloting a framework for professional development for social work staff which will offer incentives and support for social workers who stay on the front line as well as clearer career pathways; and
- developing a comprehensive recruitment campaign and piloting a work-based mature graduate entry route into the social work profession, to encourage people from a wide range of professional backgrounds to enter social work.

## MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

### “Keep your promises”

I want my social worker to be easier to reach, follow through on their promises and see me alone during visits.

- 1.17** The role of foster carers, residential carers and social workers in providing stable relationships may be complemented by looked after children’s nurses, independent visitors and mentors who can befriend children and young people and ensure they have a trusted adult in their lives.
- 1.18** At different periods other professionals will play key roles as well, for example, **early years and school staff** and particularly the **designated teacher, GPs** and other **health practitioners**, including **child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) staff**, as well as **youth justice professionals** where children in care are offending or are in custody. For over 18s, **personal advisers** are important. The Government has provided funding to enable the provision of personal advisers to young people up to the age 25 in certain circumstances.
- 1.19** Together, foster carers or residential care workers and other professionals should form a ‘team around the child’, in the spirit of the *Every Child Matters* agenda. The child’s care plan will set out the responsibility of each person in the ‘team around the child’ to take action and/or deliver services to meet that child’s needs. The role of **IRO** is being strengthened to give them the power to make sure the plan meets the child’s needs and is delivered effectively.

## Aspiration

- 1.20** The Government set out its aspirations for all children in *The Children's Plan*, following extensive consultation including with children, young people and parents. The shared aspiration to make this country the best place to grow up hold true for children and young people in care just as it does for those living with their birth families. We should be aiming for all children in care to achieve their potential by believing they **can** achieve and encouraging them to do so. Corporate parents need to have the highest aspirations for children in care. Key tasks for local partners include:
- using the role of Virtual School Head to drive up standards for children and young people in care, building on evidence from the pilots. This will support the work done in schools by the designated teacher for children in care;
  - ensuring that children in care under 5 participate in appropriate high-quality early years provision where this will help them to get the best start in life;
  - considering how better to co-ordinate health services for children in care to ensure progress against actions in the child's health care plan. This is a not solely a job for local authority social workers – health services must be proactive corporate parents as well; and
  - establishing targeted/dedicated CAMHS that appropriately prioritise children in care.
- 1.21** Our ambition to narrow the attainment gap between children in care and all children could not be clearer. It forms a central part of the Government's public service agreement (PSA) to narrow the attainment gap between low income and disadvantaged children and their peers. In addition to reforms to personalise the learning of all children, we are providing additional resources to support the learning and development of children in care at risk of falling behind their peers in their education. The Children and Young Persons Bill will place the role of designated teacher on a statutory footing, ensuring that all schools have a teacher with the expertise to identify the learning needs of children in care in the school and put in place appropriate support to remove their barriers to learning and help them progress at school.
- 1.22** Good education and health services are fundamental to improving the lives of children in care. But we also want children and young people in care to be supported across the whole spectrum of *Every Child Matters* outcomes, to ensure they have opportunities to grow up with a collection of positive memories to carry into adulthood, to find their particular talents, and to have ambitions to excel and achieve in them. Engagement in a range of activities not only helps build positive relationships, but also helps them to stay safe, reducing involvement in antisocial behaviour and offending.

### MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

#### **"Let me sleep over without police checks"**

I can't feel normal with my friends if you police check their families when I stay over. Just use your judgement like any good parents would.

- 1.23** Local partners should ensure that all young people, including young people in care, have access to sufficient positive leisure time activities, in line with the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This should include free access to leisure services for those in care and involvement in youth service activity.
- 1.24** In addition to the statutory services, private and third sector organisations can offer new and different opportunities to children in care. Local authorities should work with local private and third sector providers in partnership to develop those opportunities and the Local Strategic Partnership provides the ideal forum for this. This will help to ensure that, as children get older, they are able to access a wide range of volunteering, work experience and employment opportunities.



Care leavers from Lewisham in South Africa as part of the South East London to South Africa (SELSA) project (picture by Delroy Bent).

## SPOTLIGHT

## The benefits of play and time in green space

There is compelling evidence on the benefits of play to children, both for enjoyment and developing the skills needed to prosper in childhood, and as preparation for later life. This includes development of social skills, risk management skills and brain development associated with the ability to learn.<sup>6</sup>

Research tells us that either structured or unstructured time spent in green spaces during leisure time is very valuable. It helps us to relax and helps recovery from mental fatigue and stress.<sup>7</sup> Time in, or sight of, even small amounts of green space can reduce aggression.<sup>8</sup> Having the time, space and opportunity to play freely and safely is one of the defining characteristics of a good childhood. As announced in *The Children's Plan*, the Government is investing £225 million over three years to provide better open access and free play environments for children. Nationally, this will result in 30 new adventure playgrounds and up to 3,500 play areas being rebuilt or renewed and made accessible to children by 2011.

By 2010, an offer of capital funding will be made to every local authority in England. This will support the delivery of stimulating local places to play and the opportunity to develop an agenda in partnership with their local communities. These plans will be set out in the first national play strategy for England this summer. Most of the capital funding will be spent on developing around 3,500 play areas across England, with 120 local authorities being offered around £1 million 'playbuilder' capital each. Authorities spending this 'playbuilder' capital will be expected to develop around 20–25 play areas each.

Fifteen local authorities will be selected as play pathfinders from April 2008. They will each receive around £2 million capital funding plus significant revenue funding. The play pathfinders will work with children, young people and their communities to develop innovative play sites with challenging equipment and natural landscapes, which will give all children the opportunity to play actively outdoors. The play sites will also be accessible for disabled children. The pathfinders will aim to improve play opportunities for 8–13 year olds where they currently lack places to go and things to do, and often in disadvantaged areas. Following a second bidding round in autumn 2008, a further fifteen play pathfinders will be selected so that by 2011, 30 pathfinders will each deliver 30 new adventure playgrounds and about 28 play area renewals.

<sup>6</sup> Fjortoft I, *Landscape as Playscape: the effects of natural environments on children's play and motor development*. Children, Youth and Environments, 2004, 14(2): 21–44.

<sup>7</sup> Pretty J, Peacock J, Sellens M, Griffin M, *The mental and physical health outcomes of green exercise*. International Journal of Environmental Health Research, 2005, 15(5): 319–337.

<sup>8</sup> Kuo F E and Sullivan W C, *Environment and crime in the inner city: Does vegetation reduce crime?* Environment and Behavior, 2001, 33, 343–367.

## SECTION B:

# The performance framework

- 1.25** Our vision for improving the lives of children and young people in care is underpinned by the Government's Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and the National Indicator Set for local government.
- 1.26** In October 2007, the Government published PSAs<sup>9</sup> on:
- narrowing the gap between low income and disadvantaged children and their peers, which includes a focus on improving educational achievement of children in care at Key Stages 2 and 4;
  - improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people, which includes a focus on improving the emotional health of children in care;
  - improving the safety of children and young people, which includes a focus on reducing the proportion of children with three different care placements per year and on improving long-term stability of care placements; and
  - increasing the number of children and young people on the path to success, which includes a focus on improving the participation in education, employment and training by care leavers, and the suitability of their accommodation.
- 1.27** Our success, or failure, in delivering the *Care Matters* agenda will be measured largely in terms of how well we do on these indicators. The priorities highlighted above are reflected in the new National Indicator Set for local government<sup>10</sup>. The performance of PCTs will also be assessed vigorously via the 'vital signs', published in 2008, which have comprehensive coverage of children's health.
- 1.28** From April 2008, the National Indicator Set and vital signs will inform all local area agreements (LAAs) and, from 2009, the new local comprehensive area assessment (CAA). Local authorities and PCTs will be expected to use these arrangements to determine local priorities.
- 1.29** The local and national level performance frameworks reflect the huge importance that central and local government and our partners place on achieving measurable improvements in outcomes for children in care, reinforcing our shared vision for improving the care system and children and young people's experience of it. Measuring the improvement in outcomes for children and young people in care in this way will enable local authorities to track the progress that they are making and assess where their provision should be improved. It will also enable us to keep track at national level and to continuously improve the support we offer for locally-driven improvement. These arrangements will give a clearer picture of how the policies set out in *Care Matters: Time for Change* are impacting on the lives of children and young people in care and how and where we should focus our efforts to support continued improvements throughout the care system.

---

<sup>9</sup> To download full copies of the PSA delivery agreements, please go to: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk)

<sup>10</sup> See [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicatorsupdate](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicatorsupdate)

The national framework is only the starting point for local improvement. Local authorities and their partners will also want to decide at local level what other measures to put in place to support their own understanding of the progress they are making against local priorities.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Public Service Agreements and the National Indicator Set

There are six PSAs for families, children and young people over the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review period, which set a vision for continuous and accelerated improvement in the Government's priority outcomes. The new performance framework for local authorities and local strategic partnerships – set out in the local government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* – is critical to delivering the PSAs at a local level.

The local government National Indicator Set underpins our PSAs framework. It provides a single set of 198 measures representing the national priorities for local government, working alone or in partnership, over the next three years and includes all of the locally measured PSA indicators. The indicators are organised into seven themes: Stronger Communities, Safer Communities, Children and Young People, Adult Health and Well-being, Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality, Local Economy and Environmental Sustainability.

Every local area will negotiate up to 35 targets from the set of 198 indicators, which will be complemented by statutory education and early years targets, to form their LAA. Setting the targets will be the subject of negotiation between central government and each local area. Performance against each of the indicators will be reported at least annually for every single tier and county council Local Strategic Partnership. The National Indicator Set will be the only measures on which central government will performance manage outcomes delivered by local government, working alone or in partnerships.

## SECTION C:

# Changes to legislation and guidance

**1.30** The statutory framework for supporting children in care is set out, primarily, in the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002. It is in accordance with this that local authorities and their partners support children in need including those who for whatever reason are looked after by the local authority. This legislation is complemented by the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which sets out how decisions regarding adoption are to be made, and the Children Act 2004, which introduced a duty to co-operate to improve the well-being of children. The *Care Matters* programme builds on this legislative framework, but some changes are necessary to help local partners to deliver further improvements for children in care. The Government is making the changes that require primary legislation through the **Children and Young Persons Bill**, currently before Parliament.

### SPOTLIGHT

## What will the Children and Young Persons Bill do?

1. It will enable local authorities to pilot the **Social Work Practice** model, giving social workers more freedom and flexibility (more information about the Social Work Practice pilots can be found on page 31).
2. It will introduce more checks and balances into the care planning and review system, ensuring the voice of children in care is heard by **strengthening the role of the IRO**. Legislation will also give ministers the power to make provision for IRO services to be delivered by a national body independent of local authorities in the future, if there are no significant improvements in the contribution of IROs to improving care planning.
3. It will provide for local authorities to maintain effective contact with children in care by making explicit the **duty for social workers to visit** all looked after children, including those placed in children's homes, supported independent living and youth custody.
4. It will make **independent visitors** available to a wider group of children in care than those out of touch with their birth families (particularly those who are placed at a distance from their home or are in residential care). Independent visitors offer children a means of accessing advice and support from someone outside of the care system.
5. It will support greater educational stability, by ensuring that the **education of children in care is not disrupted** as a result of a care placement move; increasing the support available for children in care at school by putting the role of the **designated teacher** on a statutory footing; and ensuring local authorities support care leavers who go on to **higher education** with a minimum of £2000.
6. It will restrict local authorities from placing children **out-of-authority**, requiring local authorities to adopt a pro-active approach to improve the local provision of services.



7. It will strengthen the range of enforcement action which may be taken by the Chief Inspector in cases where children's homes are found to be substandard, and give individuals whose approval to be a foster carer has been turned down or terminated, access to an **independent review mechanism**.
8. It will **extend the duty to appoint a personal adviser and keep the pathway plan under regular review** to all care leavers who start or resume a programme of education or training after the age of 21 up until 25. In addition, it will ensure that the young person's placement plan is properly reviewed when significant placement decisions are made, particularly where 16–17 year-olds are moving from a stable care placement to an 'independent' flat or hostel.
9. It will enable local authorities to provide improved support **for family and friends carers**, for example, by amending section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to give more discretion to local authorities to give carers financial support and reducing the obstacles which family carers face in obtaining **residence and special guardianship orders**, by shortening the time periods before which they can apply for these orders without leave of the court.
10. It will ensure **appropriate and continuing supervision of children in long-term residential placements** made by health and education services whilst supporting the role of the family.

**1.31** Once the Bill has passed through Parliament, the Government will update and consolidate the range of **regulations and guidance** on support for children in care. We have already revised and consulted on Volume 1 of the Children Act guidance, Court Orders, which was published in January 2008. The Government is currently working with partners to revise **National Minimum Standards** for Children's Social Care settings and services, and will consult on these later in 2008.

**1.32** During the course of 2008 and 2009, we will be revising and consulting on the remaining statutory Children Act guidance, with a view to issuing revised guidance by the end of 2009. The guidance will help to support the step-change in local practice that we need to make the *Care Matters* vision a reality for each individual child in care. Central and local government, health and education organisations and other partners will need to use their expertise to ensure that the guidance helps local partners and professionals to work together to achieve good corporate parenting at every level – promoting the voice of the child, nurturing stable relationships and maintaining high aspirations. The *Care Matters* white paper set out some of the topics which will feature strongly in the new guidance:

- a. improving the relationship between children and social workers by:
  - ensuring children are usually seen alone without carers present; and
  - putting arrangements in place for children to contact social workers outside scheduled visits;
- b. the importance of working with birth parents whilst a child is in care and developing Children in Need Plans for all children who return home from care;

- c. developing effective arrangements to support family carers and requiring every local authority to publish their policies for doing so;
  - d. bringing together the care planning requirements
    - ensuring that the care plan takes full account of the likely impact of any decisions on the child's education
    - designing and delivering effective Personal Education Plans
    - developing effective Health Plans including health promotion
    - embedding leisure activities within the care plan;
  - e. promoting educational achievement including
    - securing high-quality early years' education for children in care under 5 (particularly those aged 3 and 4)
    - ensuring children in care benefit from good sex and relationships education;
  - f. strengthening the role of the IRO;
  - g. minimising the risk of children going missing from care and responding effectively when children do go missing from their care placements;
  - h. anticipating and preventing placement breakdown.
- 1.33** For health services, the NHS Operating Framework for 2008/09 sets out five priorities including keeping children well, improving overall health and reducing health inequalities. It is underpinned by the Government's PSA to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. The new Child Health Strategy to be published in 2008 will set out Government's long-term vision for delivering on this ambition, and an independent review of CAMHS setting out how we can support the mental health and well-being of children and young people, particularly vulnerable children such as those in care.
- 1.34** PCTs and local authorities are under a duty to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of the health and well-being of their local community. Guidance on the JSNA sets out that it should take into account the needs of all children, including particularly vulnerable groups such as children in care. Building on the JSNA, the Child Health Strategy and the review of CAMHS, we are committed to publishing **revised guidance on promoting the health of children in care** for consultation by the end of 2008 which will be statutory for local authorities, PCTs and other health bodies. The guidance will set out how they must work together to assess the needs of children in care and ensure that services are provided to meet those needs. In particular, it will set out how CAMHS should provide targeted services for children in care.

- 1.35** For schools, we will consult on draft **statutory guidance on the role of the designated teacher** in autumn 2008. This guidance will build on the guidance in the *Education of Young People in Public Care* published in 2000 and the current good practice of many schools and colleges. Designated teachers take the lead responsibility, with the support of the head teacher and chair of governors, for raising the attainment of children in care attending the school. They should identify their learning needs, set learning goals and help to remove barriers to their education. An important part of their role is their contribution to the development and implementation of a child or young person's personal education plan – part of their statutory care plan.
- 1.36** In addition to the statutory framework set out above, we will be issuing other specific pieces of guidance during 2008. This will include, for example, guidance on the personal education allowance for all children in care at risk of not reaching the expected standard in their education and guidance on child trust fund top-ups for children who have been in care for more than a year.
- 1.37** Together, our shared vision for change for children in care, the overall performance framework and the changes we are making to legislation and guidance set out a clear direction for the improvements required at local level.



## PART 2

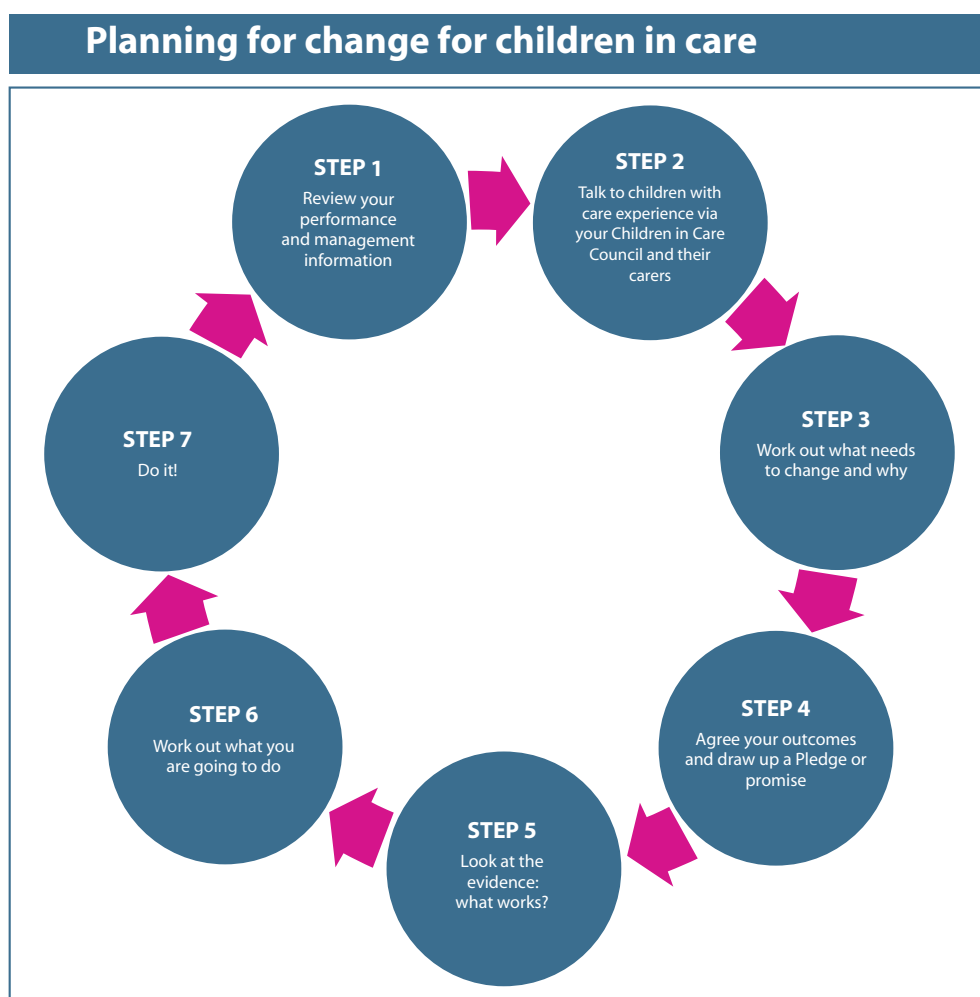
# Delivering change locally: the challenge for Children's Trust partners





## SECTION A: Systematic planning for change

- 2.1** Local partners should use their Children’s Trust and the Children and Young People’s Plan to plan for change for children in care. This means involving Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), schools and GP practices as well as others such as the Arts Council, Sport England, and local museums, libraries and galleries. To be effective, this planning must be set firmly within the framework of wider planning for all children and young people. An effective strategy for children in care must take into account universal and targeted services and not focus exclusively on specialist or acute services. It should also consider the need to safeguard children in care, with input from the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 2.2** Good planning for children in care will follow the same path as any good planning process. The key steps are set out in the box below. Local partners will need to be ambitious when following these steps and to keep in mind the breadth of the vision for children in care set out in Part 1 of this plan.



- 2.3** The Placement Stability Development Project recently commissioned by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), which included work with 33 local areas, provides a helpful framework for thinking about delivering change for children in care locally. Although the project focused on stability, as the key driver of other long-term outcomes, it highlighted factors that make for success across the whole of the local care system.

## A more effective 'front door'

- 2.4** Where there is a high rate of children entering care, local partners often struggle to assess and co-ordinate their needs in a timely way and to commission sufficient placement services to provide stability, leading to poor overall outcomes. However, cutting entry to care risks children coming into care later, when they are more harmed by their experiences and less likely to make successful attachments to new carers. Any steps to limit entry into care must be supported by investment in high quality, evidence-based, multi-agency prevention services for children on the edge of care and their families.
- 2.5** Local partners should ensure that they:
- are able to undertake high quality assessments to support good decision-making about when to admit children in care;
  - ensure the provision of specialist intensive multi-agency family support services where care is not the right option; and
  - provide intensive and responsive rehabilitation and support where care is a short term option.
- 2.6** Given there is too often a gap in service provision for families with very complex needs, this may well have implications for the local children's services commissioning strategy.

### SPOTLIGHT

## Support Care

Support care is designed to support families through periods of difficulty by providing a planned series of short breaks. Parents retain responsibility, and children are not removed from home. The service can be infinitely flexible, and offer help in the short term or over longer periods of time as needed. Placement options can vary from occasional day care to regular weekends. Support carers can also act as befrienders and mentors, helping young people with specific difficulties such as school exclusion, drug use, offending, or third party abuse.

The Fostering Network has now launched the Support Care Network at [www.fostering.net/supportcare](http://www.fostering.net/supportcare), which is funded by the Government. The overall vision is of a motivated community of service managers and social work practitioners who:

- feel supported by their peers on a national and local level;
- are in touch with the latest legislation and developments relating to support care; and
- are promoting support care successfully to policy makers, social services and prospective support carers.



## Strong management grip

- 2.7** Without effective management grip it is impossible to tell whether each child is in the best possible place for ensuring that their developmental needs are met. It is also hard to assess the aggregate need for services to inform commissioning priorities, to identify planning drift or to expose skills shortfalls and identify training needs. Strong management grip involves: using indicators to focus activity, in line with the performance framework set out in Part 1; providing senior officers with regular reports to strengthen ownership and accountability; improving the quality of dialogue with the family courts, for example, by agreeing protocols to reduce delay and improve quality assurance; and using IROs to help understand what's happening for individual children in care.
- 2.8** The Integrated Children's System (ICS) is one tool which can help. It captures available information about individual children in need which can be aggregated to provide population data about needs and outcomes. Local authorities will need to identify not only the basic management reports but the range of outputs that managers and practitioners require from their information systems in order to carry out their daily work, to improve outcomes for all children in need and to find out whether such improvements have been realised. A helpful guide to developing such a framework was produced in 2004.<sup>11</sup>
- 2.9** More qualitative data about the experience of children and young people and the quality of their relationships can be obtained from the information recorded on the Assessment and Progress Record within the ICS. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which from April 2008 should be used to screen all children in care on an annual basis for emotional health problems, will provide further information about children's needs. Also important will be self-evaluation about the effectiveness of the service including feedback from foster carers, social workers, IROs, etc.

## Improved choice

### MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

#### **"Give me a choice"**

Give me a choice about my placement and, unless it is an emergency, let me meet my new carers before I move. Things can work out if we are a good match.

- 2.10** In many local areas, a lot of work has been done over the last few years to increase placement choice. Success depends on effective commissioning and monitoring. This is the only way to ensure that children in care are provided with the one thing they have told us makes the single biggest difference to their lives: being in the right placement. In determining this, the local authority making the placement will have to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and ascertain the child's wishes and feelings and those of others, including the child's parents.

<sup>11</sup> Gatehouse M, Statham J and Ward H *The Knowledge: How to get the information you need out of your computers and information systems*, 2004 TCRU

- 2.11** The local authority will need to consider a number of factors, which are reflected in the Children and Young Persons Bill (see Part 1: Section C), such as family and friends' carers, at the first and every subsequent stage of decision making. Use of family and friends' carers plays a key role in enabling children to remain with people they know and trust if they cannot live with their parents.
- 2.12** Subject to Parliamentary approval of the Bill, local authorities will, have to place the child near to home and within the local authority's area so far as it safeguards them and promotes their welfare. Children and young people say they can feel isolated in distant placements and miss contact with their friends and with their local communities, and feel that they may not be able to depend on regular visits, for example from their social workers. In addition, children placed out of their local authority are particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes.
- 2.13** The local authority will also have to ensure that a child or young person's education is not disrupted as a result of care planning decisions, especially at Key Stage 4. Stability is fundamental to ensuring a good education for all children and children in care experience too many changes of school places.
- 2.14** In future, all local authorities will need to manage the local market in the supply of accommodation for children in care more proactively. Planning will involve local authorities taking steps to secure sufficient accommodation within their authority area that is appropriate for the needs of the children in their care. Local authorities will need to enter into commissioning arrangements with a number of different providers that are capable of meeting their anticipated needs. This will include providing a range of accommodation that is able to meet the needs of all children in the area, including disabled children and children from black and ethnic minority groups.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Disabled children

In May 2007 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and HM Treasury published a report *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families (AHDC)* following the review of local services for disabled children and their families.

The report sets out a radical change programme for disabled children's services and is supported by a £330m plus funding package over the next three financial years (2008 to 2011) – £259m of this funding will be issued to local authorities for short break provision.

The Children and Young Persons Bill will also place (subject to Parliamentary approval) a new duty on local authorities to provide short breaks services for individuals caring for disabled children, for the first time putting these on a statutory footing. The Government will review the current requirements surrounding short break carer status, competency and assessment over 2008-09.

## Improved support

- 2.15** Ensuring stability of support means ensuring that structures that give consistent relationships a high priority and don't require or encourage staff or children to move frequently between different teams. Too often responsibility for children can move from one team to another rather than priority being given to keeping them with one social worker. The white paper highlighted a range of options for local authorities to improve stability of the workforce, including developing innovative ways of remodelling social care through the Children's Workforce Development Council's Social Work Remodelling pilots and providing stronger support for new entrants through piloting a newly qualified social worker status. The Social Work Practice (SWP) pilots also give local authorities an opportunity to think radically about structures and ways of working to provide greater stability and continuity to children in care.

### SPOTLIGHT

## The Social Work Practice pilots

The SWP pilots will test whether independent organisations of social workers, working under contract to the local authority, can provide greater continuity and stability for children in care. Provisions enabling the model to be tested are in Part 1 of the Children and Young Persons Bill.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, local authorities will be selected to take part in the pilots over the summer. Pilot local authorities will then invite tenders from prospective SWPs. We anticipate that following a rigorous commissioning process the pilots will 'go live' by summer 2009.

Between 2009 and 2011 there will be comprehensive and robust evaluation of the SWP model, taking into account the impact on the recruitment and retention of social work staff, the quality of the relationship between social workers and children, stability of placement and feedback from children, young people and their families. The evaluation will focus not only on what happens within the SWP but also on the impact on local authority services, particularly child protection and family support services. A report of the evaluation of the SWP pilots will be shared with all interested parties to enable decisions to be made about the future of the SWP model.

The Government will publish a 'Social Work Practices Prospectus' in spring 2008 which will provide more detail about the way we see the model working and the timescales for moving forward.

- 2.16** As well as thinking about how they can improve the support offered by social workers, local partners should consider the range of services in place for foster and residential carers to help them to support children in care. There should be a broad package of high quality education health and leisure services on offer to ensure the wide range of children's needs are being met, as set out in Part 1.

## CASE STUDY

### The Bradford Multi-Agency Looked After Children Partnership

The Bradford Multi-Agency Looked After Children Partnership was formed in March 2005 and has adopted the Healthy Care Standard to inform partnership working and service development. In 2006 the work of the partnership was independently audited using the Healthy Care Audit Tool; the outcome was the development of a multi-agency looked after children strategy. The strategy built on consultation with children, young people and their carers, as well as professionals, regarding the type of service they required and what would help to improve outcomes.

The strategy has resulted in the development of targeted services and has contributed to improvements in the achievements of children and young people. For example, local research on care leavers led to the appointment of a specialist nurse for care leavers. A partnership with the local football club has young people participating in Saturday morning sessions at the club, which focus on activity and healthy living, followed by a ticket to the afternoon's match. This is combined with a leisure card for young people providing access to sports and leisure facilities in their locality which has proved to be popular and well used.

The Healthy Care audit has been important in providing a framework for partnership action and ensuring Bradford adopts a holistic approach in addressing the needs of children in care. This approach has also been presented as evidence to inspections of Bradford's services.



*Children and young people performing in the Myrtle Theatre company's production "City of One", which explores the realities of care for all concerned, Tobacco Factory, Bristol, September 2007 (picture by Graham Burke)*

- 2.17** DCSF's Placement Stability Development Project found that improvement strategies which address all four factors – 'An improved front door', 'Strong management grip', 'Improved choice' and 'Improved support' are likely to be most effective. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have agreed to work with Ofsted to develop options to improve self assessment for local partners to identify where they need to focus their attention in terms of improving outcomes for children in care. This will build on existing methods and approaches.
- 2.18** Improvement strategies should also have a clear focus on educational achievement. All local authorities are under a duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care.<sup>12</sup> Local authorities should monitor the educational progress of their children in care, including those placed out of authority, and identify what additional support is needed to narrow the gap between the educational achievement of children in care and all children, and ensure that children in care reach their full potential. From April 2008, all local authorities should provide children in care at risk of falling behind expected standards of attainment with an additional personal education allowance, tailored to their learning needs.
- 2.19** It is important that local authorities work across all of their functions to remove the barriers to learning faced by children in care. In particular they should ensure that care planning works to support the education of the child or young person. For example, the local authority should ensure that decisions about where to place a child do not disrupt a child's school placement and that the child has good support at home to help them with their learning.
- 2.20** Effective joint working between local authorities and schools, and in particular designated teachers, is central to improving the education of children in care. All children in care should have a high quality personal education plan (PEP), which sets out their achievements, barriers to further progress, a series of short and long term goals and the support that will be put in place to ensure the child or young person meets these goals. A child's social worker is responsible for initiating and maintaining the PEP, as part of the care plan. However, the educational content of the PEP should be developed in conjunction with the school's designated teacher and other education professionals. The on-going input of the designated teacher is central to identification of the child or young person's learning needs and the effective implementation of the PEP. Local authorities should develop good partnerships with designated teachers and provide training for designated teachers on the care system and the needs of children in care.

---

<sup>12</sup> Children Act 1989, Section 22(3A)

## CASE STUDY

### Home tuition

Coventry has been providing home tuition in partnership with Warwick University since 2003. Each September, primary and secondary PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education) students are recruited to be tutors for children in care. There are a number of benefits to using the students rather than agency staff:

- They are good role models in respect of encouraging children in care to consider further and higher education courses
- They are closer in age and therefore closer to the culture of the young people and are able to develop positive relationships
- They develop an understanding of the issues around children in care and can be a resource in their future schools

In 2006/ 2007 a total of 53 students from Year 6 to Year 11 received extra tuition in English, Maths or Science. Initially ten sessions of one-hour were offered and where the tuition was successful an additional five or ten sessions was provided. Children and young people have found the tuition really helpful. One young person said: "I have been moved up one grade in my English. I feel more confident at participating in class discussions. I feel more confident at asking the teacher if I am stuck or need help."

## SECTION B:

# Sector-led improvement

- 2.21** Local partners all across the country are already responding to the challenge of improving services for children in care. We have much to learn from each other. National figures mask significant variations in relation to key outcomes for children in care across different local areas. In 2006, average performance in the key outcomes of educational attainment<sup>13</sup>, placement stability and the proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) at 19 varied from 0 per cent to 39 per cent; 44 per cent to 90 per cent; and 0 per cent to 100 per cent respectively. However, raising the performance of the authorities whose outcomes are currently below average to the mean level would only raise the overall national percentage to 14.3 per cent for GCSE attainment, 68.2 per cent for placement stability and 67.2 per cent for EET at 19. We need much bigger changes for this vulnerable group of children and young people. All authorities need to make a concerted effort in improving outcomes for children in care.
- 2.22** Variation cannot be explained away by pointing to differences in the social context of the area. Deprivation, rurality or local authority structure do not appear to have a significant impact on the outcomes achieved. Indeed, the data show that in some cases, there are significant year-on-year variations in the outcomes achieved within individual local areas. This is, in part, explained by variations in the size and needs of different cohorts of children and young people. However, the data also show that, whilst outcomes in some authorities vary significantly from year to year, there are groups of authorities where outcomes for education, stability, or EET are consistently above the national average. Equally, there is a group of authorities where results are consistently below average.
- 2.23** We need to make much better use of the knowledge, skills and expertise already in the system to lead the type of transformation we all want to see for children in care. *The Children's Plan* set out how Children's Trusts, led by local authorities championing the needs of their populations, are ideally placed to drive collaboration with other services – particularly PCTs and other health bodies – to improve outcomes for children and young people. Together, we can make change for children in care an example of how the system itself can lead change.

### MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

#### **“Let me help train carers”**

I want to help train foster carers so that they understand what young people in care really need. And I want the chance to talk to councillors and managers about life in care, to help them make services better for young people.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics for attainment are based on percentage of children looked after for at least a year achieving 5 or more GCSEs (or GNVQ equivalent) at grade A\* to C; those for stability are based on the proportion of looked after children aged under 16 who have been looked after continuously for at least two and a half years at 31 March 2007, and of those the number and percentage who had been in the same placement for at least two years, or placed for adoption.

**2.24** The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy produced by central and local government, puts in place arrangements for more joint decisions over the priorities for improvement. There will be an increasing role for the **Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships** (RIEPs) over the next three years, as they develop their capacity. Sector-owned RIEPs will provide a regional framework for channelling support offered by government departments and will identify, co-ordinate and support improvements in local authorities and local partnerships. RIEPs will also encourage authorities to offer support and advice to each other through peer approaches. In addition, **Government Offices** will be supporting sector-led improvement for children in care, through:

- facilitating and hosting learning networks to share expertise and knowledge between authorities at regional level, identifying and disseminating good practice, and helping to deliver regional and sub-regional projects;
- the annual improvement cycle, providing support and challenge to local authorities and their partners to help them drive up standards; and
- drawing on experience and expertise in local authorities and the regions, supporting the development and implementation of government policy and delivery of PSAs.

**2.25 ADCS**, through its regional structure, and **LGA** are well-placed to work with Government Offices and RIEPs to support the sharing of effective practice and assist authorities in benchmarking their arrangements to help promote greater consistency. Together these organisations will:

- work with others, especially the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), to help Lead Members for children's services to carry out their corporate parenting responsibilities well, including through events in which Lead Members can discuss shared concerns and learn from each other. This work is being informed by a major research project commissioned by LGA and carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), the outcomes of which are due for publication in spring 2008; and
- contribute to improved practice in local areas through the two-year 'Narrowing the Gap' project that LGA is running in partnership with the DCSF. The project, which began in June 2007, is innovative in bringing together the results of rigorous analyses of data and research with the views of experts in the field and practice on the ground. Ninety-six councils are working on the project, increasing the chances of it making a national impact. Children in care are one of the groups whose needs are being focused on through the project.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> The first report of this project can be found at <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/care/page-do%pagelid=234484>



## SPOTLIGHT

## 10 Golden Threads

Early findings from the Narrowing the Gap project suggest 10 golden threads which are crucial for 'narrowing the gap':

### **You can do it! (Expect the best)**

- creating a culture of high aspirations
- and giving children, parents and carers access to a trusted (dependable) adult.

### **Together with parents and carers**

- working in real partnership with parents and families and building on their strengths
- 'doing with, not unto.'

### **Through the eyes of the child**

- making all services more child and family focused, with adult services more sensitive to their clients as parents or carers and alert to the needs of children
- 'Think Family'.

### **Holding onto the baton**

- ensuring as much stability and continuity as possible, in relationships between trusted adults and children, parents and carers
- managing those transitions that are unavoidable with care.

### **'Learning to learn'**

- making the building of children's resilience a major policy objective
- configuring education so that it benefits the most vulnerable or disadvantaged, encouraging their participation and giving them lots of supplementary and 'catch-up' support.

### **'Cornflakes to canoeing'**

- taking active steps to make extended services available to disadvantaged children within, and beyond, the school.

### **Unite to succeed – 'sanity not vanity'**

- deepening the integration of services, systems and processes.

### **'Shape up and keep fit'**

- re-shaping the workforce and ensuring it is appropriately trained, supported and celebrated.

### **Prove it – making change happen**

- right performance management systems in place nationally/locally; that encourages focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable groups in particular – shared approaches to this across services, including health.

### **From good to great – 'passion with purpose'**

- having transformational leadership in place, political and professional (local and national)
- a clear vision communicated well. Planning and processes to back it up and deliver results, including the use of 'Outcomes Based Accountability'.

**2.26** The **Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services** (CfEO) will present a real opportunity to drive forward sector-led improvement for children in care. Vulnerable children (particularly children in care) is one of six key themes on which the CfEO will concentrate in its first few years of operation. The work of the CfEO will include:

- drawing together partners to ask questions about trends and focus on 'making a difference'. This will involve the engagement of partners across the local, regional and national level;
- offering local government and its partners tailored support from experts to embed good practice and learning from the CfEO's findings; and
- ensuring that the voice and views of children, young people and their families are meaningfully incorporated into its work programme.

**2.27** The DCSF will award a grant to run the CfEO from April 2008 and we expect it to begin operation in July 2008. The Government and its partners will work with CfEO to ensure it contributes to delivery of the *Care Matters* vision set out in Part 1.

**2.28** The **third sector** is also assisting with driving forward improvement. There are many excellent examples of this such as: the Alliance for Child-Centred Care, which was established by Voice and National Children's Bureau to promote child-centred care; the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care, a major collaborative initiative to improve standards of practice and outcomes for children and young people in residential care in England; and the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, involving 46 local authorities, which has developed national standards, a self assessment system and a practice database of almost 300 useful examples and tools from across the country to use when working with young people in and leaving care.

**2.29** Other sources of useful information and support include the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Research in Practice, Making Research Count and the DCSF research programme.

## SECTION C:

# Tools and resources

**2.30** As useful resources are developed, we will make them available via the Every Child Matters website at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk). This will create a menu of tools to enable partners working in particular parts of the system to improve practice in their area. The table below sets out what will be available and when.

### WORKING WITH FAMILIES ON THE EDGE OF CARE

The Government is currently commissioning a programme of regional training events on **Family Group Conferencing** to run in 2008/09. This will support the toolkit and reader on Family Group Conferencing that have already been produced.

### CORPORATE PARENTING

The Government has funded NCB to develop corporate parenting training materials. A toolkit **Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice** has been developed in partnership with local authorities. It is focused on the practical steps that local areas need to take and includes training materials for officers and elected members. These are tailored depending on their level of specialism – from awareness-raising for all council members, through to the specialist knowledge required by chairs of corporate parenting committees, or similar arrangements. It also includes sample policies and procedures, and background briefings on key issues facing corporate parents. The materials are being launched alongside this implementation plan.

### PLACEMENT STABILITY

The Government has undertaken targeted work with local authorities in relation to placement stability (see Part 2: Section A) and is launching a report setting out the key lessons learnt from that work, as well as **a guide to help senior managers to develop their own local approach to improving stability**. This will be available on the *Care Matters* website shortly after publication of this plan.

Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) produced **Foster Care Training, Support and Development Standards** in May 2007 with an expectation that providers will begin to implement them from April 2008. The standards provide a national benchmark for the skills and development that all foster carers should have.

Over the course of 2008, CWDC will be developing an overarching **Children's Social Care Workforce Development Framework** which will set out the expected qualifications and likely career pathways for all social care workers including foster carers. It will include specialist training units on working with vulnerable children and those with disabilities. Further training will be provided in 2008/09 on **special guardianship**.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We will publish guidance on promoting the health of children in care, including targeted child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), before the end of 2008. This will be statutory for local authorities and health bodies.

However, improving health and well-being cannot be achieved by the NHS alone. Local authorities and their partners should ensure that children in care have access to high quality positive activities. The NCB has been funded to produce of **packs for children in care and carers on things to do and places to go in the local area**. These packs will be available in 2008.

**In addition there are now 90 local Healthy Care Partnerships**, bringing together a wide range of agencies with a contribution to make in improving the health of children in care, including representatives from arts, music, drama and sports organisations. A training manual for carers has been produced along with a wide range of resources such as public health briefings for commissioners and policymakers. A particular focus of the work has been on children's participation in service development. An audit tool was developed, informed by children and young people, to enable local authorities to produce their action plan and young people's involvement has been developed further through a range of creative participation projects.

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

**Statutory guidance on the role of the designated teacher** will be published in autumn 2008. Designated teachers take the lead responsibility for raising the attainment of children in care attending their school.

Children in care have the highest priority in school **admissions** and, outside of the normal admissions round, local authorities have had the power, where necessary, to direct schools to admit a child in care, even where the school is full. This should ensure that children in care get access to the school that best meets their needs.

**Statutory guidance on exclusion** was published in September 2007. This sets out that children in care must only be excluded as a last resort. Schools and local authorities must work together to find alternative approaches to reduce the need for exclusion. Children in care should only be excluded once appropriate alternative provision has been identified. It is the Government's view that alternative provision should be made available for excluded children in care on day one of the exclusion.

**Revised Children Act 1989 guidance** will cover the duty to promote the education of children in care, covering expectations of the local authority and its partners. This will be supported by guidance on annual personal education allowances for children in care at risk of not reaching expected standards of educational attainment, to be published in April 2008

**Guidance to school governors** issued by the Department for Education and Skills in 2005 will be updated during 2008 and consulted on alongside guidance on the role of the designated teacher.

The Government has asked Ofsted to report on progress in **special educational provision** in 2010 and we have asked Ofsted to report on the progress of children in care with Special Educational Needs (SEN) as part of that work. In addition, the Government is commissioning research on parents' experience of the SEN system of identification, provision, assessment, statement and appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal. The researchers are being asked to look at the position of children in care and their parents/carers in that system. The guidance to carers and those with parental responsibility will follow and take account of that research and Ofsted's report

### **FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

In 2007, the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) carried out an action research and development project investigating pastoral support in further education (FE) colleges, including looking at how they could better meet the needs of children in care. The pastoral support project worked with 19 pilot sites from different learning and skills sectors within the FE system to identify good practice and develop an online **pastoral support tool-kit for the full range of FE providers**, which will be available from April 2008. To support this toolkit, from September 2009, training on the needs of children in care will be included in the Further Education Principals Qualifying Programme and the professionalisation programme for Skills for Life professionals.

The Children and Young Persons Bill will introduce a requirement for all local authorities to provide a **£2,000 bursary for all care leavers who go to higher education (HE)**. This is in addition to the support that local authorities already provide. *Aimhigher*, a national outreach programme funded by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Higher Education Funding Council for England, targets learners that are under-represented in HE, especially people from lower socio-economic groups and disadvantaged backgrounds. Children in care have been identified as a priority, given their very low rates of participation in HE. Alongside this, in 2008 we will work with the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education and the Office For Fair Access (OFFA) to improve the information and support available to care leavers considering and entering HE.

### **HOUSING**

The Government has funded Rainer to identify **best practice in delivering housing support services** to vulnerable young people including those in or leaving care. This project will begin in April 2008. The project includes providing advice to young people as well as providing information and resources to local authorities and service providers to improve the range and quality of accommodation available to young people. The project will create a practice database on accommodation and housing for young people leaving care on [www.leavingcare.org](http://www.leavingcare.org).

May 2008 will see the publication of updated **good practice guidance on housing and children's services cooperation regarding homelessness** including on meeting the specific needs of young people leaving care.

## COMMISSIONING

**National Occupational Standards for service commissioners** have been developed by the Government in partnership with Skills for Care and CWDC. There will be around 50 NVQ units, covering NVQ levels 6 and 7. Work is currently underway with potential providers and we expect qualifications to be available from September 2008.

Following extensive consultation with providers and commissioners, in November 2007, **the National Contract for the Placement of Children in Residential Homes** was published on the ECM website ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/nationalcontracts](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/nationalcontracts)). This standardised contract is available for local authorities to use when commissioning residential placements from the private and third sectors. It aims to minimise duplication, simplify transactions and ensure a fair and transparent market.

A report entitled *Determining the Optimum Supply of Children's Residential Care* was published in October 2007 on the Department's research website ([www.dcsf.gov.uk/research](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research)) and on the Every Child Matters website ([www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/research](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/research)).

## YOUTH JUSTICE

NACRO, the Crime reduction charity, has produced **a handbook on reducing offending by looked after children** which identifies the ways that children in care can be supported in order to reduce risk factors and improve outcomes.

NCB received Government funding to produce *Tell them not to forget about us, a guide for local authorities, youth offending teams (YOTs) and staff in young offender institutions (YOIs) to support their work with children in care and care leavers in YOIs.*

## FINANCE

*Care Matters* set out the need for delivering better value for money and developing longer-term financial strategies for achieving this. The Government has funded work to support this activity.

The **Cost Calculator for Children's Services** was developed by Loughborough University. It is a computer software application and database designed to assist local authorities and other agencies to monitor the true costs of services to children and thus to improve strategic planning and commissioning. The overall objective of the calculator is to enable local partners to explore how services might be better configured to improve outcomes and value for money.

The current version of the Cost Calculator allows the calculation of costs for social care processes for children in care. Further research is already underway to develop the Cost Calculator to incorporate unit costs for all services that children receive within specific time-frames. These will include the unit costs of social care, education, health, mental health, socio-legal and youth justice processes.

## MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

### **“Give me a filofax about services”**

I need an easy way to find out about services I can use. A filofax all about local services would help me find my way around.

- 2.31** The implementation of *Care Matters* will take sustained effort from all parties, including central and local government, health and education bodies and the third sector over a considerable period. As the improvement programme gains momentum, the Government and its partners will be looking for other opportunities to work with partners across all the sectors to ensure we provide the most effective support for local action to improve the lives of children in care.





## PART 3

# Monitoring and evaluating progress





# Listening to children and young people

- 3.1** Listening to children and young people must be an intrinsic part of the whole care system, running through every organisation, at every level. It will be central to our evaluation of both the *Care Matters* pilots and progress towards our broader policy objectives. The voice of children and young people will feature strongly in the national stocktake as it should in local partners' self evaluation and Ofsted's inspection framework.

## SPOTLIGHT

### The 'Leading Improvements for Looked After Children' (LILAC) project

The Leading Improvements for Looked After Children (LILAC) project, initiated by A National Voice, draws on the experiences and expertise of care-experienced young people to improve the policy and practice of local partners in involving and consulting children in care and care leavers.

Young people have:

- developed a quality framework for the involvement of young people in the development of policy and practice, their care planning and review, and the administration of complaints. This uses the National Youth Agency 'Hear by Right' framework adapted to the circumstances of children and young people in care; and
- used this framework to carry out assessments of local authority and other services.

The framework has been piloted and is ready for use. A kitemark will be issued by A National Voice to those who can demonstrate excellence in involving and consulting children and young people. Alongside this the LILAC standards have been used to develop training modules for use with service providers.

## The role of Ofsted

- 3.2** Ofsted's role, both as the regulator for settings and services and as the inspectorate for local authority children's services, is vital in terms of monitoring performance and providing a consistent evidence base to support local and national improvement strategies.
- 3.3** **Regulatory inspection** – Ofsted is developing a range of pre-inspection materials including online self evaluation tools for its inspections of establishments and agencies. It is also developing benchmarking guidance for its inspections of children's social care. In addition, wherever there is more than one inspection of an institution, such as children's homes that also provide education, Ofsted will combine the necessary inspections into one event to better focus on overall outcomes for children.

**3.4** Currently, Ofsted's inspections of children's social care include twice-yearly inspections of children's residential care homes, three-yearly inspections of fostering, adoption and targeted inspections of the work of CAFCASS. The approach to inspection of children's social care is undergoing review and Ofsted will consult on any changes being considered.



Picture by DeadCat Dreaming created at an event for children in care and their carers in Worcestershire. The picture represents participants' thoughts and feelings on how to improve services in Worcestershire, for example, the image of a heart hugging a mind emphasises the need to promote awareness and understanding among children of the impact of physical health on emotional well-being and vice-versa. The creation of the pictures enabled participants to see that their views had been heard.

**3.5 Local authority inspection:** From April 2009, alongside the Comprehensive Area Assessment arrangements that will succeed the current Joint Area Reviews and Annual Performance Assessments of services for children and young people, Ofsted will be conducting a rolling programme of inspection of services for children in care. Ofsted will consult with stakeholders in developing this rolling programme. It will include the gathering of direct evidence about the effectiveness of services in improving outcomes for children in care as well as drawing on a range of findings from Ofsted's regulation and inspection activity and seek to keep the inspection burden to a minimum.

**3.6 The Children's Rights Director** will play a key role in the delivery of *Care Matters*, enabling children and young people in care to participate, reporting on their particular experiences and bringing together inspection data about children's perceptions of the services they receive. This will provide an important measure of whether children feel that change is being delivered effectively.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Annual surveys of children's experiences

In 2008 Roger Morgan, the Children's Rights Director, is beginning an annual series of reports to monitor the experience of children in six key areas that children have identified as important to them. These are safeguarding, bullying, care planning, consultation with children, complaints processes, and whether changes of living placement and any accompanying changes of school were positive or negative for the child. Each report will be based on a secure web survey completed by children and young people invited from a randomly selected range of establishments and services across England. The same range of questions will be used each year to allow trends to be reported from 2009.

## Using data

- 3.7** Effective use of data, at both a national and local level, is essential to understanding the impact that we are making and to continuing to improve support for children in care. Through the annual OC2 and SSSDA903 data collections, we will continue to monitor the outcomes that children in care achieve. From 2009, we will, for the first time, be able to link data about children's care experience to their educational experience and characteristics recorded in the National Pupil Database. This will provide much greater detail on the factors impacting on the educational attainment of children in care. For the first time, the new Children in Need census will provide robust national data at individual child level on children who are on the threshold of care, and on those who move in and out of care over time. We will ensure that this data is made available to help support local change and the processes outlined in previous sections of the plan.
- 3.8** Recognising that the poor outcomes achieved by children in care are not simply attributable to failures in the system, we will use data in the National Pupil Database to develop a robust education value-added measure which will be available in 2008. We will also help local authorities to benchmark their performance in relation to educational attainment for children in care.
- 3.9** CWDC's report on the *State of the Social Care Workforce* and the planned annual updates will contribute towards taking stock of the progress made in terms of recruitment and retention, skills and other key workforce reforms.

## Evaluating our pilots

- 3.10** The *Care Matters* green paper highlighted a range of innovative ideas for enhancing service delivery to children in care at the front line. Some of these ideas, most notably Social Work Practices, are so novel that the *Care Matters* white paper made clear they would be piloted thoroughly before they any decisions can be taken about wider roll-out. Others, like the Virtual School Head are testing programmes to ensure planned national roll-out works as effectively as possible.

**3.11** The pilots will be evaluated against impact on key outcomes: stability, health and well-being, and educational attainment. We want to ensure that the pilots are as useful as possible, not just for those involved but for everybody, and will be sharing lessons learned about good practice across all local authorities and their partners. It is important that we continue to monitor progress to check how well we are doing and to review and amend our approaches as necessary, to ensure we learn from our successes and understand what we need to do better.

## National stocktake

**3.12** To get an overall picture of progress we will need to use performance management data, the views of children and young people and their families as well as those involved in providing services and information from inspection and regulation. Drawing on this information, and involving a significant input from key delivery partners, the national stocktake will be an annual ministerial event. It will focus on the progress being made in implementing the measures in *Care Matters* and, more importantly on whether the outcomes achieved by children in care are improving fast enough as a result. It will look at the evidence of progress across the country, as well as lessons emerging from the pilots. A short report of the event will be laid before Parliament.

**3.13** As well as monitoring the progress being made towards achieving the vision of the care system outlined in *Care Matters*, the stocktake will celebrate the achievements of children in care and the hard working and committed individuals and teams who work with these children to help improve their life chances. These celebrations will take place locally and regionally and will be delivered in partnership with relevant third sector organisations and representatives from children in care councils. We will make sure that key messages from these celebrations are part of the formal agenda for the stocktake.

**3.14** To allow the changes being brought in to bed down, and local change programmes to be developed, the first national stocktake will take place in 2009.

## Next steps

**3.15** Over the next few months, we will be organising a series of regional conferences led by Government Offices to focus on driving and supporting improvement in outcomes for children in care locally. We intend to hold at least one event in each Government Office region by the end of the summer. The events will be an opportunity for sharing good practice across a broad range of areas, enabling local agencies and professionals to understand the specific action they need to take to make the *Care Matters* vision a reality. Also this year, work will begin on developing revised Children Act and statutory health guidance, which will set out what needs to be done to meet the needs of every individual child in care. Producing this guidance will be a collaborative effort, involving organisations and professionals at national and local level.

**3.16** We look forward to working with local partners and professionals at the regional *Care Matters* events and in delivering the wider programme of reform. This year marks the start of a long term programme, building on the work which is already underway across the country. In 2009 many of the Bill provisions start to take effect, Ofsted inspection of services for children in care will begin and the revised statutory health guidance will come into force followed by the revised

Children Act guidance by the end of the year. During 2009 we should be seeing radical changes in strategy and practice for achieving the *Care Matters* vision across the country.

- 3.17** We must all do our very best to work together across organisational, professional and geographical divides to make sure that at our first national stocktake in 2009, we have a real cause for celebration. This means never shifting our focus from the goal of excellent corporate parenting, based on the voice of the child, stable relationships and high aspirations, to give every single child in care the best possible start in life.

**Poem: Love from the heart**

Love is but a sweet red rose  
Or a candle to light up the dark,  
A trip for a romantic meal  
Or a quiet walk in the park.  
It can be shown within a gift  
Or in something that you say,  
But this is something that must be shown  
Each and every day.  
If it's being there as a shoulder to cry on  
Or a person who's always kind,  
Express this feeling to all you know  
In actions and in mind.  
Be happy throughout every day  
And be jolly to all you part.  
Being kind to them is one thing  
But make sure it's from the heart.

**Adam**

You can download this publication or order copies online at  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)

Search using the ref: DCSF-00279-2008

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DCSF Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Sherwood Park  
Annesley  
Nottingham NG15 0DJ  
Tel: 0845 60 222 60  
Fax: 0845 60 333 60  
Textphone: 0845 60 555 60

Please quote the ref: 00279-2008DOM-EN

ISBN: 978-1-84775-133-1

D16(7551)/0308/14

© Crown copyright 2008

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for non-commercial research, education or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged. For any other use please contact [hmsolicensing@opsi.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hmsolicensing@opsi.gsi.gov.uk)

**75% recycled**  
This leaflet is printed  
on 75% recycled paper

 **recycle**  
When you have finished with  
this leaflet please recycle it