## **Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation**

## A young person’s guide.

Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation’ is the government’s plan for how we make children’s social care, work better. This is a guide to that plan for children and young people.

If you want more information, there is a full document on the government website and a YouTube video;

[Guide for children and young people: Stable Homes, Built on Love - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love/guide-for-children-and-young-people-stable-homes-built-on-love#overview)

<https://youtu.be/g3U6y1WBQNM>

The governments planned changes are big, so they are asking for your views on the plans so that they can make sure the new plans do what children and young people need them to do.

**Your views are important, and the government want to hear them! But to give your views they must be on the government website by 11th May 2023, so it is important we do this as soon as possible.**

## **Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation**

## A picture containing text, sky, sign, outdoor Description automatically generatedSo, what is children’s social care?

##### Children’s social care is there to:

* Give support to children, young people and families who need extra help
* Protect children and young people from harm
* Give care and a home to children and young people when needed

##### Children’s social care is a very important service. These new plans show how the government wants the best for every child who needs help or care. Children’s social care covers a lot of people who work with children and families all over the country.

In this document the government are talking about changes to the whole country including Central Bedfordshire.

They also explain:

* When they talk about care, it means a child is looked after by their local authority if they cannot be looked after by their parents. The government believe care should always provide a child with love, safety and stability. This will help make sure that every child can grow up to achieve their best.
* A local authority is your local government. Local authorities are responsible for their communities. They make decisions about things that happen in your community and keep children safe.
* When the government talk about a social worker, they usually work for your local authority. Their job is to help children and families. They listen to children and families. They make decisions to keep children safe.
* When the government talk about children in this guide, they mean children under 18 and young people over 18 who have left care.

#### These are just plans by the government and before any changes are made they are asking everyone in the country what they think, including children and young people!

As you are reading this, you may want to:

* *think about your own opinions of the changes*
* *talk to other children, young people and adults about your ideas*
* *think about what could be done to make them happen*

You can then tell us about your thoughts by replying to the consultation questions at the end.



If you are working in a group you might want to:

* *talk about which changes you think are the most important*
* *work through a fictional story to see how these changes could make a difference to children’s lives*
* *share ideas about different things you could do to create the changes you want to see*

The government want to hear from *children and young people* *and their families* so they can understand what people think about the new plans before they finalise them.

**Throughout this guide there are questions you can answer about our plans.**

If there is anything here that you do not understand, you can ask an adult to explain it to you. This could be a parent, social worker, support worker, teacher or another adult you trust.

## **Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation**

##### What are the plans?

The government have put the plans into 6 Ambitions;

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| Ambitions |
| Ambition 1: Family Help |
| Ambition 2: Keeping children safe |
| Ambition 3: Supporting families to help children |
| Ambition 4: Make care better for children in care and care leavers |
| Ambition 5: Children have great social workers |
| Ambition 6: Improving the whole system for children and Families |



## **Ambition 1: Family Help**

All families and children need help sometimes. Families, neighbours and friends can usually help each other. Sometimes help might come from a teacher, doctor, nurse, or people like youth workers.

But sometimes families need more help than that. In future, these families will be supported by a new service called **Family Help**, so they can get the right help at the right time.

At the moment, when families need help from children’s social care, they often go through lots of meetings with different people. The government want to make it easier to get that help.

Children and families might also feel like the help they get is not what they need or they might feel that they have too many changes of adults working with them. The government want that to change.

The government’s new plan is to:

* make sure all children and families can get the right help at the right time, no matter what they need or where they come from
* make it easier for children and families to get help
* test a new way of giving help to families in up to 12 different parts of the country
* employ more adults, who do not always have to be social workers, to help children and families
* make changes to the help we give to disabled children including by reviewing how the law works
* make sure Family Help works for people who live in and come from all different places
* give better help to families that are experiencing problems linked to not having enough money



## **Ambition 2: Keeping children safe**

**All children should be kept safe from harm.**

Most often parents do the job of keeping children safe. But sometimes parents have problems of their own that mean they find it hard to keep their children safe and healthy. Sometimes children are hurt by people from inside or outside their family.

In the future, social workers, nurses, doctors, police officers, teachers and lots of other people will work better together to keep children safe. They should talk to children, their parents and family members about how best to help.

Sometimes, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other family members and family friends can also help. We should do more to make sure this can happen.

Some children might need the help of a social worker with extra training and experience so they can make the best decisions about how to keep them safe.

If a child can’t live with their parents because it is not safe, their social worker and the family court should speak to them and their family about where they will live.

The judge in the family court should listen to what everyone has to say. It’s their job to make safe decisions for that child and their family. They should make a decision as quickly as they can.

The government plan to:

* test a new way of keeping children safe in the same parts of the country that the government are testing Family Help
* make sure social workers with lots of experience and training work with children and their families to keep them safe
* be clearer on how adults like teachers, doctors, nurses and the police should work together to keep children safe
* encourage adults who work in children’s social care to make sure they listen more to children
* help parents and other adults close to children to understand what they need to do to keep them safe and healthy
* make changes so that children are kept safe from things that can hurt them outside of their home
* think about how teachers might have more of a role in keeping children safe, as they usually see and speak to children a lot
* improve how family courts work so that the decisions they need to make about children’s lives are made quickly, and to make sure the courts work well with parents

## **Ambition 3: Supporting families to help children**

Even with lots of help, sometimes parents are not able to keep children safe. When that happens, it is important that social workers talk to other family members about this.

This could be grandparents, aunts, uncles or other family members. It could also be family friends or other adults that children know well.

If children can’t live with their parents, they should live with someone they already know, love and trust if it is possible and safe.

In children’s social care we call this ‘kinship care’.

If children need to live in kinship care, then their kinship carers should be given help to make that happen. That help might be money, or it could be things like help to get a child to and from school every day.

The government want to give more help to children and kinship carers.

The government plan to:

* tell local authorities that it is important to put family first, when it is safe
* ask local authorities to find and support family members so they can help children and parents to be safe and healthy, when they need it
* make sure children who can’t live with their parents are asked if there is anyone that they already know and would want to live with
* ask local authorities to use their money differently, to help kinship carers and children
* test new ways of supporting kinship care and children with Family Network Support Packages in up to 19 different parts of the country – these packages are different types of help that local authorities can give to kinship carers, like helping them build an extra bedroom or giving them some extra money to pay for things a child needs
* offer training and help to all kinship carers in the country to help them look after children
* create a new ‘kinship strategy’ about how we support family members to help children, with more information about how we support children and kinship carers

## Heart and house paper cutout on a white wood background**Ambition 4: Make care better for children in care and care leavers**

The government want lots of support for children to stay with their families, but even with help for families, sometimes children need to come into care to keep them safe.

Some children in care live with foster carers and some live in a home with other children.

Sometimes, the home that children in care live in does not make them happy or keep them safe. Sometimes children in care move home too much and their home isn’t close to their friends, family and school.

The government need to make sure that every child in care has a safe and loving home where they are happy.

The government want children to stay close to the people and places they know. This means government and local authorities need to work together to find more homes for children to live in.

The government want to make sure children in care have loving people in their lives all the time. This could be brothers and sisters, other family members or friends.

The government want to make sure children in care have everything they need to do well in school and learn new things. Everyone should make sure children in care are able to stay healthy and can see doctors or nurses if they need to.

If you are in care your local authority is your ‘corporate parent’. This means they should act like any loving parent would and provide you with the best possible support and care.

If you are leaving care, you should continue to feel safe and loved. You should be able to stay living in your community in a safe home. You should be helped to go to university, get an apprenticeship or to get a job.

No one should ever feel ashamed or be treated differently because they are, or have been, in care. Every child in care and care leaver should be listened to – their wishes and feelings should be prioritised when making decisions about their lives.

The government have 6 missions to improve all aspects of life for children in care and care leavers.

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| Ambitions |

#### Mission 1

Social workers and other practitioners make sure children and young people can see and spend time with the people who love and matter most to them.

#### Mission 2

The government want to have more people and organisations to act like, or be, corporate parents.

#### Mission 4

The government want to make sure children in care are supported to do well in school or get good jobs, including older children aged 16 to 19 years old. The government will do this by:

\* Creating more training and jobs for care leavers

\* Increasing how much money we give to care leavers who do an apprenticeship

\* Working with universities to support care leavers to go to university and to succeed and do well when they are at university

\* Offering more support in school and colleges such as working with a tutor

\* Giving more money to the Care Leaver Covenant which supports care leavers aged 16 to 25 with jobs

#### Mission 3

The government want to make sure there are enough good foster homes and children’s homes for children to live in. The government will do this by:

\* Increasing the number of foster homes across the whole country, so that children can stay nearer to their friends and family when they come into care

\* Building more children’s homes in areas where there aren’t enough, so children do not need to move so far from home

#### Mission 6

The government to make sure adults working with children in care and care leavers know how to support them with their physical and mental health needs.

The government will give people more training on this. We will make sure children in care and care leavers can see doctors or nurses more easily.

#### Mission 5

The government will make sure more care leavers live in safe homes by:

\* Helping young people who leave care to stay living with their foster family or give help and support as they start to live on their own

\* Increasing the amount of money young people get when they leave care

## **Ambition 5: Children have great social workers**

## Two people collaborating over books

Lots of children already have social workers. Social workers support children and families every day. Many children find their social worker is a big help in their life.

Some children with a social worker do not have such a good relationship with them or find their social worker changes too often so they can’t get to know each other well.

The government want every child who needs one to have a great social worker. They can change the lives of children and adults for the better.

The government want all children who have a social worker to have a strong relationship with them. That means the government want social workers to change jobs less often.

To make that happen, social workers need leaders and the government to support them more and they need to know how valued they are.

If you have a social worker, the government want to make sure they spend enough time with you. The government want you to feel like you can talk to them about anything and that they listen to you.

The government plan to:

* increase the number of people becoming social workers
* help social workers stay working at the same place for longer – this will mean children do not have to tell their life stories lots of times
* reduce the amount of office work social workers do so they can spend more time with children and families
* give social workers more and better training
* celebrate social workers who are doing a good job so that everyone knows what an important job they do for children and families

## **Ambition 6: Improving the whole system for children and families**

The government do not think that everyone who works in children’s social care always shares the same views about what it should do for children and families.

The government want it to be clearer for children and families what social workers and other workers should do for them.

While the government make these changes, to make sure we keep learning how to make the system better. The government want to know we are getting it right for all children and families no matter where they live or who they live with.

This means the government need to be better at understanding what is working and what is not working.

That means listening to children much more and including their views.

The government makes sure there are checks that children and families across the whole country are getting good services. They do this by having local authorities, children’s homes and fostering agencies inspected.

When children and families are not getting what they need, the government want those services to get better faster.

The government plan to:

* create new guides for people working with children and families, and the people who are in charge of children’s social care, about what they need to do for them
* listen more to children and young people
* listen more to parents, families, friends and the people that love children
* collect better information about the difference social care is making to children and families’ lives
* make sure services improve more quickly when they are not good
* make sure the money given to local authorities to do their work is given fairly based on the needs of people living there



## **Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation**

## **Tell the government what you think!**

The government would like you to answer the following questions on the plans, to let them know what you think. This must be done by 11th May 2023

These can be done on the website so it goes straight to the government, or you can ask an adult to help you;

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/children2019s-social-care-national-framework/childrens-social-care-implementation-strategy-cons/consultation/subpage.2023-01-18.4350942611/>

But so, you know what they will ask, these are the questions, you may want answer the questions and ask an adult to put your answers on the website;

### Question 1: What difference do you think our 6 ambitions for change will make to the lives of children and families?

Have a read of the 6 ambitions for children’s social care in the children and young people’s guide.

Do you think the government have covered everything? Do you think the ambitions will make a difference to the way things currently are? What difference do you think it will make?

Select one from the following:

* I think they will make a positive difference
* I think they will make things worse
* I think it is too soon to tell what difference they will make
* I do not think they will make any difference to the way things currently are
* It does not matter. I do not believe that anything will change
* I do not know

What more, if anything, could make things better?

### Question 2: If a friend told you they were having serious difficulties with their family at home and they wanted help, which trusted adult would you recommend they speak to?

You might want to think about the following adults they may have in their life:

* their immediate family (such as their mum or dad, older brother or sister)
* a member of their wider family (such as their cousin, aunt, uncle, grandparents)
* a family friend
* a teacher or another member of staff at school
* their youth worker or participation worker
* their doctor, school nurse, or someone else they speak to about their physical or mental health
* their sports coach, or an adult who runs an activity or hobby club they go to
* somebody else (you tell us)

You might think it is more likely you would look for help online. If that is the case, which websites or organisations would you advise they go to for help?

### Question 3: Do you think the missions for children in care and care leavers are the right things to focus on?

Yes or no?

If you like, give any further feedback you have. This can be about any of the missions. You might want to consider what else the government can do to help children in care and care leavers.

### Question 4: What makes, or would make a great social worker?

You might also want to tell us what you think about the things the government plan to do. Do you think if the government do those things, children who have a social worker will have great social workers?

### Question 5: If you were the Prime Minister, what would be the most important thing you would want to change in children’s social care?

Look again at the ambitions for children’s social care, and what the government have said they will do. These are the sorts of things the Prime Minister can change.

What would be the most important thing you would want to make sure happens? Do you have any ideas on how this could happen?

### Question 6: What did you think of the children and young people’s guide?

Choose a score from the options below:

* 5 – great
* 4 – good
* 3 – OK
* 2 – not good
* 1 – very bad

If you want to give further feedback, what could the government do next time to make it better?

### Question 7: In the future, what do you think is the best way to ask children and young people what they think about our plans for children’s social care?

The government chose to ask you questions about our ambitions using a website. The government have also asked an organisation to work with some children and young people with lived experience of care and gather their views for us.

The government know they may not have got this right.

The government want to keep listening to you in the future. What is the best way for us to do that?

### Question 8: How old are you?

Choose one from the following options:

* under 11 years old
* 12 to 15 years old
* 16 to 18 years old
* 19 to 25 years old
* prefer not to say

### Question 9: Who you are

Choose an option from:

* a child or young person with a social worker or family support worker
* a child or young person in care
* a care leaver
* none of the above
* prefer not to say

### What will happen next?

The government will read all the answers you have given and think about them carefully. They will also talk to groups of children and young people about what they think of the plans.

In autumn 2023 the government will publish a document showing what people said.

The government will keep track of the progress they are making to improve services for children and young people over the next 2 years.

In 2 years’ time, the government will look at how much progress has been made and what extra changes might be needed. This includes spreading the changes that have been testing to more local areas. There might also need to be changes to the law.

The government will keep talking to children and young people as they make changes to find out what children and young people think. The government want to make sure that changes make a big positive difference to children’s lives.