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National Consortium for Examination Results
Community Interest Company

2025 NCER Annual Members' Meeting

Keynote: Children's Social Care Landscape – Childrens Wellbeing and Schools Bill

- ▶ **NCER Strategic Steering Group Member**
- ▶ **Julie Jenkins, Director of Children's Services, Calderdale Council**



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The ambitions of the Bill are set out in seven key parts:

Built on previous Government work by Josh McCallister – Stable Homes Built on Love

- Making a child-centred government
- Keeping families together and children safe
- Supporting children in the care system to thrive
- Cracking down on excessive profit making
- Driving high and rising standards for every child
- Removing barriers to opportunity in schools
- Creating a safer and higher quality education system for every child





Keeping Families Together

Multi-agency Child Protection Teams

Keep families together and children safe by mandating local authorities to offer family group decision making so that all families have an opportunity to form a plan of family-led care. Improving information sharing across and within agencies, strengthening the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and implementing multi-agency child protection teams.

- Learning from the pilots and pathfinders
- Investment through Families First Partnership funding
- Resources for integrated teams (Health, Police, Schools)





Who will be in the Multi-agency Child Protection Teams?

The bill will insert new sections into the Children Act 2004 to require safeguarding partners to establish and run at least one multi-agency child protection team in their area. The main purpose of these new teams is to support the local authority in delivering its child protection duties.

ICBs will be required to nominate a health professional with experience in relation to children's health, while the police will be required to nominate an officer to be part of each multi-agency child protection team. The local authority is required to nominate someone with experience in education in relation to children and a social worker with experience in relation to children and may appoint other appropriate individuals after consultation with safeguarding partners.



Service enhancements for children in care & care leavers

- Support children in the care system to thrive - local authorities to publish their local offer for children in kinship care and their carers
- Extending the virtual school head role to children in kinship care
- Councils to provide 'Staying Close' support to eligible care leavers where their welfare requires it
- Regional Care Co-operatives being piloted – Greater Manchester
- Approval of 'Deprivation of Liberty' outside of secure care



Tacking profiteering in the children's social care market

- Introducing a financial oversight scheme to ensure financial stability
- Bringing transparency to the costs of homes
- Creating a mandatory notice period for market exit
- “If the reforms do not have the anticipated impact in tackling profiteering across the children's homes placement market, we will not hesitate to take legislative action to prevent private providers continuing to make excessive profits from publicly funded services for some of our most vulnerable children. We plan to introduce powers for the Secretary of State to cap the level of profit which can be made from children's social care placements through secondary legislation in the future.”





What happens next?

- The bill will be subject to debate in Parliament and will no doubt be amended during its passage.
- It is likely to become law sometime in late spring/early summer 2025.
- Some provisions will come into force the day the act is passed (such as the powers to make regulations and orders), others will come into force two months later (such as the duty to publish information for kinship carers and children in kinship arrangements)
- Some provisions will be implemented over a longer period of time. For example, the new multi-agency child protection teams will not be implemented until 2027.

