



Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT

LORD WATSON OF INVERGOWRIE  
By email only: watsonm@parliament.uk

7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

*Dear Mike,*

First, let me thank you for the considered contributions you made to the debates during the first day of Report stage of the Children and Social Work Bill. We discussed a range of important issues and I am grateful for your input.

During the debate I committed to write to you to set out in more detail the outcomes of vulnerable children that local authorities report on to the Department for Education.

The specific question you asked was whether the existing legislation lists the outcomes that were included in amendment 35. Section 83 of The Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to report on any of their children's social care functions that the Secretary of State requests and this includes the outcomes of vulnerable children. This provides the flexibility to request information that is most useful to government when developing policy. It also avoids setting out in law a prescriptive list of data returns that may quickly become unnecessary or out of date and are then difficult to amend.

I am pleased to tell you that we report already on many of the outcomes listed in your amendment. The table in annex 2, maps the headings under amendment 35 to the outcomes we already report on.

The attached annexes provide detailed information on:

1. The current legislative framework for reporting outcomes
2. The outcomes that are currently reported on for vulnerable children
3. Future work to improve the data we have on outcomes for vulnerable children

I hope that this answers your questions and reassures you that we take very seriously the need to report on the outcomes that vulnerable children achieve in order to develop evidence based policy and drive improvement in local services.

LORD NASH

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Current legislative framework**

#### **Section 83, subsection 3**

Every local authority shall, at such times and in such form as the Secretary of State may direct, transmit to him such particulars as he may require with respect to—

- (a) the performance by the local authority of all or any of their functions—
  - (i) under the enactments mentioned in subsection (9); or
  - (ii) in connection with the accommodation of children in a [F2care home or independent hospital]; and
- (b) the children in relation to whom the authority have exercised those functions.[F4; and
- (c) the performance by the Local Safeguarding Children Board established by them under the Children Act 2004 of all or any of its functions.]

#### **Section 83, subsection 9:**

The enactments are—

- (a) this Act;
- (b) the Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 to 1969;
- (c) section 116 of the M1Mental Health Act 1983 (so far as it relates to children looked after by local authorities);
- [F7(ca) Part 1 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- (cb) the Children Act 2004;
- (cc) the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

## **ANNEX 2**

### **Outcomes currently reported**

For children looked after:

- Missing or away from placement without authorisation

For children looked after continuously for at least 12 months:

- Child substance misuse
- Child offered intervention for substance misuse problem but refused it
- Child received intervention for substance misuse problem
- For children aged 10 to 17, whether they have been convicted or subject to a youth caution
- For children aged 5 or under, whether their development assessments were up to date
- Annual health assessment up to date
- For children aged 5-16 (inclusive), Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score
- Attainment at key stage 1, and attainment at key stages 2 and 4 broken down by category of SEN
- Information on SEN
- School absence and exclusions data

For care leavers:

- Activity at age 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 (includes Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), attendance at higher or further education, and training or employment)
- Accommodation at age 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 (includes Staying Put) and whether this is deemed suitable accommodation
- Information on whether the local authority is in touch with their care leavers

For children in need aged 5 to 16:

- Prevalence of SEN/D and free school meals
- Attainment at key stages 2 and 4, and progression between these key stages
- School absence and exclusion rates

Headings under amendment 35	Outcomes reported	Future Plans
Physical health, mental health and emotional well-being	<p>For looked after children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For children aged 5-16 (inclusive), Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score</li> <li>- For children aged 5 or under, whether their development assessments were up to date</li> <li>- Annual health assessment up to date</li> <li>- Information on SEN</li> </ul> <p>For children in need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information on SEN</li> </ul>	We are exploring with the sector how to best measure mental health and / or wellbeing outcomes.
Education and training	<p>For looked after children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attainment at key stage 1, and attainment at key stages 2 and 4 broken down by category of SEN</li> <li>- School absence and exclusions data</li> </ul> <p>For care leavers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activity at age 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 (includes Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), attendance at higher or further education, and training or employment)</li> </ul> <p>For children in need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attainment at key stages 2 and 4, and progression between these key stages</li> <li>- School absence and exclusion rates</li> </ul>	We will benefit from the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes Study (LEO) and be able to gather A level attainment, and attendance at HE and FE institutions.
Employment	<p>For care leavers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activity at age 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 (includes Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), attendance at higher or further education, and training or employment)</li> </ul>	We will benefit from the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes Study (LEO) and be able to gather information on dates of periods of employment and salary earned during employment.
Accommodation	For care leavers:	We will of course consider

Participation in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation at age 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 (includes Staying Put) and whether this is deemed suitable accommodation</li> </ul> <p>For looked after children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child substance misuse</li> <li>- Child offered intervention for substance misuse problem but refused it</li> <li>- Child received intervention for substance misuse problem</li> <li>- For children aged 10 to 17, whether they have been convicted or subject to a youth caution</li> </ul> <p>For care leavers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information on whether the local authority is in touch with their care leavers</li> </ul>	<p>how we report on Staying Close when it is introduced.</p> <p>We will benefit from the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes Study (LEO) and be able to match data with MoJ and with DWP on benefits.</p>
--------------------------	--	---

## **ANNEX 3**

### **Future work to improve data**

We are looking at how we can use data collected by other departments or agencies to build a fuller understanding of the outcomes achieved by care leavers. We are identifying opportunities across government to pull together different data collections to understand trends in the experiences and outcomes of care leavers to enable us to target resources effectively. We are already working with HMRC, DWP and MoJ.

In addition, the Longitudinal Education Outcomes Study (LEO) will bring together information on education, labour market, and benefits into a single linked database. The eventual coverage will be up until the age of 30 and we will be able to identify care leavers within this database. The provision dataset is/will be available XXXXX. Some of the data items included in the LEO are:

- Education: attainment by subject at GCSE and A level, FE and HE qualifications, school and FE or HE institutions attended
- Benefits: dates of benefit receipt, type of benefit received, characteristics at time of claim
- Employment: dates of periods of employment, salary earned during employment.

We are also considering how to make better use of the rich data already collected on children in care and care leavers, including looking at the development of an outcomes framework consisting of the most useful indicators of success, to enable better local authority decision-making. We have already had some discussions with sector organisations about the kinds of outcomes and indicators we should be thinking about, particularly around mental health.