



Baroness Barran

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House of Lords,
Houses of Parliament,
Westminster,
London,
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My Lords,

I am writing to thank you for your recent contributions to the debate on the 6th September in relation to Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Children and Families Act (2014). I reiterate my thanks to Baroness Tyler of Enfield, for tabling this important debate and chairing the inquiry into this piece of legislation last year. I also extend my thanks to all members of the Children and Families Act (2014) Committee. It is with such careful scrutiny of past legislation, that we can learn lessons about the success of past legislation, and identify where improvements can be made.

At the debate I offered to write to Lady Wyld to set out the actions associated with one of our six key missions for care leavers, as set out in *'Stable Homes, Built on Love'*. In particular, our mission to reduce the disparities in the long-term mental and physical outcomes of care-experienced people and the activity to support that, by 2027. As set out in *'Built on Love'* we will be tackling this mission by:

- Updating the existing joint DfE/DHSC guidance on promoting the health and wellbeing of Children Looked After and extend it to cover care leavers up to age 25. Guidance will be updated to encourage local authorities to purchase NHS Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPCs) for care leavers who have ongoing medical conditions and struggle to pay for prescriptions.
- Working with NHS England and DHSC to ensure all Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs), Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) and local authorities better support the planning and commissioning of services to meet the assessed physical and mental health needs of children in care and care leavers in their area.
- Taking steps to extend reporting of deaths or serious incidents involving children, to include the deaths of care leavers up to the age of 25. We consulted on this as part of the wider consultation on our key statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Driving progress through the Early Career Framework for social workers, we will review current levels of knowledge and skills in relation to mental health among other social care practitioners, such as Personal Advisors, children's homes staff, staff working in virtual schools and Family Help practitioners.

The Lord Bishop of Durham also set out the importance of the Family Test, and asked “when will the Government introduce a requirement for each department to complete and publish their assessments under the family test”. I did not address this directly at the debate, so was keen to follow up in writing to note that published guidance sets out that the decision on whether and how to publish Family Test assessments falls within the responsibility of each government department. Where appropriate, publishing Family Test assessments either separately or with other equality impact assessments will show that departments have considered their policy impacts, both positive and negative, on families.

Whilst writing to you all, I also wanted to clarify a statistic I provided at the debate. Whilst the Department publishes quarterly statistics on adoption, which includes statistics on children with ‘harder to place’ characteristics, one of which is ethnic minority children, we do not break these statistics down further in public data. The figure I provided for the time it takes for ethnic minority children to wait for adoption of ten months on average was based on internal analysis. We are currently looking at what information we should regularly publish in our quarterly adoption statistics on ethnic minority children.

Thank you again for your contributions to the debate, and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we deliver reform in children’s social care. I hope these further details have been useful and I will place a copy in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donna Barran".

BARONESS BARRAN

MINISTER FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND STUDENT FINANCE