

Support for Infants and Parents etc (Information) Bill

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Explanatory notes to the Bill, prepared by the Department of Health and Social Care with the consent of Sally-Ann Hart, the Member in charge of the Bill, are published separately as Bill 160—EN.

Support for Infants and Parents etc (Information) Bill

[AS INTRODUCED]

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[AS INTRODUCED]

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Make provision for and in connection with the making available of information about support available for infants, parents and carers of infants, and prospective parents and carers, including reporting requirements relating to such support.

BE IT ENACTED by the King’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 English local authorities: duties relating to Start for Life offer

- (1) *An English local authority must publish a Start for Life offer for its area on its website under the heading “Start for Life”.*
- (2) A “Start for Life offer” for an English local authority’s area is information about the following services that the authority is aware are available in its area for infants, parents or carers of infants, or prospective parents or carers—
 - (a) maternity services provided by or on behalf of a public authority;
 - (b) health visiting services provided by or on behalf of a public authority;
 - (c) services promoting positive relationships between infants and their parents or carers provided by or on behalf of a public authority;
 - (d) breastfeeding and other infant feeding services provided by or on behalf of a public authority;
 - (e) mental health services provided by or on behalf of a public authority;
 - (f) such other kinds of services that are—
 - (i) likely to support infants, parents or carers of infants, or prospective parents or carers, and
 - (ii) provided by or on behalf of a public authority, as the Secretary of State may specify by regulations;
 - (g) such services that are likely to support infants, parents or carers of infants, or prospective parents or carers, being—
 - (i) services of a kind mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (f) provided other than by or on behalf of a public authority, or
 - (ii) other services, whether or not provided by or on behalf of a public authority,

as the local authority considers it appropriate to include information about in the Start for Life offer for its area.

- (3) Services referred to in subsection (2) include services that are available to infants, parents or carers of infants, or prospective parents or carers, as well as to others. 5
- (4) An English local authority must also—
- (a) publish a Start for Life offer for its area by any other means it considers appropriate,
 - (b) take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the Start for Life offer to the attention of parents and carers of infants, and prospective parents and carers, in its area, and 10
 - (c) take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that the Start for Life offer is kept up to date.
- (5) An English local authority must have regard to guidance published by the Secretary of State under section 2 when complying with its duties under this section. 15
- (6) Regulations under subsection (2)(f) must be made by statutory instrument.
- (7) A statutory instrument containing regulations under subsection (2)(f) may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament. 20

2 Guidance

- (1) The Secretary of State must publish guidance to English local authorities relating to their duties under section 1.
- (2) Before publishing guidance under subsection (1), and any revisions to the guidance that the Secretary of State considers substantive, the Secretary of State must consult— 25
- (a) English local authorities, and
 - (b) such other persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
- (3) If—
- (a) consultation was undertaken during a period before the day ("the commencement day") on which this section comes into force (including during a period that occurred before the day on which this Act is passed), and 30
 - (b) the consultation would to any extent have satisfied subsection (2) had it occurred on or after the commencement day, 35
- then, on the commencement day, the consultation is taken to satisfy subsection (2) to that extent.

3 Secretary of State's duty to report

- (1) The Secretary of State must publish a report each year relating to support available in England for infants, parents and carers of infants, and prospective parents and carers. 40

- (2) The report must include—
- (a) an overview of support that is available for such persons through services of the kind covered by section 1(2)(a) to (f), and
 - (b) such other information as the Secretary of State considers is appropriate to include in the report (for example, information about any impacts of support on outcomes for such persons, or steps that are being taken in relation to the collection of information relating to such impacts).
- (3) A report under subsection (1) must be published on a government website as soon as reasonably practicable after 1 April in the relevant year.

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4 Data protection

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- (1) Sections 1 and 3 do not require a publication of information if the publication would contravene the data protection legislation (but in determining whether the publication would do so, take into account the duties imposed by those sections).
- (2) In subsection (1), “the data protection legislation” has the same meaning as in the Data Protection Act 2018 (see section 3(9) of that Act).

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5 Interpretation

- (1) In this Act—
- “English local authority” means—
- (a) a county council in England,
 - (b) a district council for an area in England for which there is no county council,
 - (c) a London borough council,
 - (d) the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority, or
 - (e) the Council of the Isles of Scilly;
- “infant” means a child under the age of two years.
- (2) In this Act, a service is “provided by or on behalf of a public authority” if—
- (a) the service is provided by or on behalf of a person who has a function of a public nature, and
 - (b) the service is provided in the performance of that function.

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6 Extent, commencement and short title

- (1) This Act extends to England and Wales.
- (2) The following provisions come into force on the day on which this Act is passed—
- (a) section 1, for the purpose of making regulations,
 - (b) section 4,
 - (c) section 5, and
 - (d) this section.

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- (3) Sections 2 and 3 come into force at the end of the period of two months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed.
- (4) Section 1 (for remaining purposes) comes into force on 1 April 2025.
- (5) This Act may be cited as the Support for Infants and Parents etc (Information) Act 2024.

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Presented by Sally-Ann Hart

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