



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

**Transforming children's
services**

**Eighty-Eighth Report of
Session 2017–19**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 13 March 2019*

The Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed by the House of Commons to examine “the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit” (Standing Order No. 148).

Current membership

[Meg Hillier MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Hackney South and Shoreditch*) (Chair)

[Douglas Chapman MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Dunfermline and West Fife*)

[Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP](#) (*Conservative, The Cotswolds*)

[Chris Davies MP](#) (*Conservative, Brecon and Radnorshire*)

[Chris Evans MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Islwyn*)

[Caroline Flint MP](#) (*Labour, Don Valley*)

[Robert Jenrick MP](#) (*Conservative, Newark*)

[Shabana Mahmood MP](#) (*Labour, Birmingham, Ladywood*)

[Nigel Mills MP](#) (*Conservative, Amber Valley*)

[Layla Moran MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, Oxford West and Abingdon*)

[Stephen Morgan MP](#) (*Labour, Portsmouth South*)

[Anne Marie Morris MP](#) (*Conservative, Newton Abbot*)

[Bridget Phillipson MP](#) (*Labour, Houghton and Sunderland South*)

[Lee Rowley MP](#) (*Conservative, North East Derbyshire*)

[Gareth Snell MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Stoke-on-Trent Central*)

[Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP](#) (*Conservative, Berwick-upon-Tweed*)

Powers

Powers of the Committee of Public Accounts are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 148. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2019. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/copyright/.

Committee reports are published on the [Committee’s website](#) and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee’s website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Richard Cooke (Clerk), Laura-Jane Tiley, Samir Amar Setti (Second Clerks), Hannah Wentworth (Chair Liaison), Ameet Chudasama (Senior Committee Assistant), Baris Tufekci (Committee Assistant), Hajera Begum (Committee Support Assistant), and Tim Bowden (Media Officer).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Committee of Public Accounts, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5776; the Committee's email address is pubaccom@parliament.uk.

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsPAC](https://twitter.com/CommonsPAC).

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	4
Conclusions and recommendations	5
1 Pressures on children's social care	8
Variation between local authorities in the activity and cost of children's social care	8
The sustainability and resource needs of children's social care services	9
Residential care capacity	10
Evidence on the effectiveness of early interventions	11
2 Departmental oversight	13
The Department's 2022 goal	13
Cross-government collaboration	13
Formal Minutes	15
Witnesses	16
Published written evidence	17
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliaments	18

Summary

We have reported several times in recent years on the poor state of children's social care, and in 2016 concluded that the Department for Education (the Department) was worryingly complacent that nothing could be done to improve services more quickly. While the Department considers children's social care to be its most important responsibility and seeks to increase its knowledge about demand pressures, it still has not done enough to make the quality or finances of children's social care sustainable. We are disappointed that it has not set out the sustainable improvement it seeks to achieve for children.

For the avoidance of doubt, we expect the Department to improve both the quality and the cost-effectiveness of children's social care in measurable ways by its goal of 2022. This will require a step-change in the Department's understanding of pressures, the reduction of unnecessary variation between areas in their social care activities and the costs of providing them, and greater pace in its work with struggling local authorities. The sector is not financially sustainable: 91% of local authorities exceeded their budgets for spending on children's services in 2017–18. It is imperative that the Department get to grips with its understanding of demand pressures if it is to make a compelling case for adequate resources in the anticipated spending review. The disconnect between the Department for Education making policy and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government allocating funding can only be a hindrance to improving services and needs resolving.

As a Committee, we see all too often that decisions in one area of Government can increase spending elsewhere or in the future. High quality, effective, early support for children is not only vital for them and their families, but beneficial for the taxpayer as well.

Introduction

The Department for Education (the Department) has policy responsibility for children's social care services in England, and has the strategic vision that all vulnerable children should have access to high-quality support by 2022. Local authorities in England have statutory responsibility for protecting the welfare of children and delivering children's social care. At 31 March 2018 there were more than 400,000 children in need in England, and more than 75,000 children in care.

Between 2010–11 and 2017–18 the number of referrals to children's social care increased broadly in line with population growth. In contrast, over the same period there was a 77% increase in child protection assessments, and a 26% increase in the number of cases where local authorities considered actual harm or neglect to have been demonstrated. There was also an increase of 15% in the most expensive and serious cases, where children are taken into care. In 2017–18, local authorities spent £8.8 billion on children's social care. Ninety-one per cent of local authorities overspent on their children's social care in 2017–18, leading to a total national overspend of £872 million.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **The Department cannot explain why there is so much variation between local authorities in the activity and cost of children's social care.** As we have reported previously, there is significant variation between different local authorities in both the activity and cost of their children's social care. The rate of children in need episodes during 2017–18 ranged from 301 to 1,323 per 10,000 children between local authorities. The amount spent by local authorities per child in need episode ranged between £566 to £5,166, similar to when we looked at this in 2016. Deprivation only explains 15% of the variation and the characteristics of the local authority and its area are the biggest explanatory factor for the variation in activity. The Department acknowledges that it does not yet fully understand variation between local authorities, and that gaining this understanding has not previously been a priority for it. The Department has now commissioned research to understand both pressures on and variations between local authorities. The Department says that local authorities it considers stronger are bringing fewer children into the care system. The Department has not set out the level of variation between local authorities that it considers to be acceptable.

Recommendation: *The Department should set out by December 2019:*

- data on the costs and quality of children's social care for each local authority in England, which is easily accessible publicly and enables comparison between authorities;
- the key factors contributing to the variation across local authorities;
- the action it is taking to reduce variation; and
- its future targets for limiting the levels of variation between local authorities in cost and quality of children's social care.

Recommendation: *The Department should also set out by December 2019 the thresholds it deems acceptable for (i) rate of children in need episodes, and (ii) amount spent per child in need episode.*

2. **The Department does not possess a comprehensive assessment of the sustainability or resource needs of children's social care services.** The sector is becoming increasingly unsustainable financially, with 91% of local authorities exceeding their budgets for spending on children's services in 2017–18 and an overall overspend of £872 million in 2017–18. Unless the Department gets to grips with its understanding of demand pressures it will struggle to make a compelling case for adequate resources in the anticipated spending review. To understand the resources required the Department has commissioned research to understand both pressures on and variations between local authorities. At present, there is no link between spending and quality of services, as assessed by Ofsted. Indeed, Ofsted unlike the Care Quality Commission for hospitals, does not consider the cost-effectiveness of local authority provision. In addition, while local authorities share good practice

through programmes established by the Department, it is not yet apparent whether this is effectively spreading high-quality and well-evidenced children's social care practice.

Recommendation: *By September 2019, the Department should decide how it will assess and monitor the cost effectiveness of children's social care in inspected local authorities. Based on what it decides, the Department should commit to regular reporting on cost effectiveness, incorporating ratings on how well authorities use resources.*

Recommendation: *By September 2019, the Department should also set out what action it has taken to encourage the take-up of good practice in children's social care across local authorities and how it will assess take-up. This should include progress updates on the work of its What Works Centre for children's social care and its Partners in Practice Programme. It should include specific examples of how this work has benefited vulnerable families and children.*

3. **The increasing use, and high cost, of residential care places local authorities under extreme financial pressure.** There is a lack of residential capacity for children's social care and its use is often unplanned, leading to 'bidding wars' between local authorities for places for children. Although the number of children placed in residential care by local authorities increased by 9.2% between 2013–14 and 2017–18, the cost of residential care increased by 22.5% over the same period, from £1.02 billion to £1.25 billion in real terms. The Department is working with local authorities to commission cost-effective residential care but demand is clearly outstripping supply.

Recommendation: *The Department should set out by December 2019 how it will work with local authorities to manage the supply of high quality and cost-effective residential care and match this to demand.*

4. **There is a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of early interventions in children's social care.** There is a strongly-held belief in the value of early intervention in addressing the needs of vulnerable children, and preventing these children from becoming even more at risk of harm. Despite this, the Department and local authorities are still only at the beginning of understanding what families need and the evidence of how best to meet that need. Those early intervention services which have been commissioned by local authorities in recent years have supported families with relatively fewer problems but have not been effective for high-risk children and families. A number of local authorities have done work on the pre-proceedings process with parents, however there is significant variation between authorities. Local authorities which have closed children's centres have not seen any consequential increases in child protection plans. The Department has now launched a What Works Centre, which is designed to be a national institution holding intelligence about all good practice in children's social care, including early intervention.

Recommendation: *To reduce variation across local authorities in pre-proceedings support, we concur with the recommendation of The Family Rights Group in their*

2018 Care Crisis Review that the Department should set up a working group - with representation from legal and social work practitioners and families - to improve and standardise existing pre-proceedings guidance.

Recommendation: *The Department should set out by September 2019 how the What Works Centre will identify cost-effective early interventions and how it will spread this knowledge through its programme of good practice.*

5. **The Department has not set out what overall improvement it is seeking in children's social care by 2022.** In 2016, the Department committed to deliver a programme of reform in children's social care by 2020. The delivery date for this programme, however, subsequently slipped to 2022. The Department has also made slow progress in improving the quality of children's social care: While there is some recent evidence of improvement, 58% of local authorities are still assessed as below Good by Ofsted, a state of affairs the Department acknowledges is "terrible." The Department was not able to set out for the Committee either the overall level of quality it is seeking to achieve in children's social care, or how it will measure this.

Recommendation: *The Department should write to us setting out the quality of children's social care it is seeking to achieve by 2022 and how it will measure this. It should specify a percentage target for how many authorities it is aiming to be rated as "Good" or "Outstanding" by 2022. It should do this in a fuller letter accompanying the Treasury Minute response to our report.*

6. **There is little evidence of strong cross-government collaboration in improving children's social care.** While there is evidence of cross-Departmental co-operation ahead of the spending review, the Department has sole policy responsibility for children's social care. The complex needs of vulnerable children mean that, in a local setting, they often require services provided by a number of agencies, including local authorities, courts, the police, the Department for Work & Pensions and the health service. There is a particular problem in how local authorities and courts work together when both have different interpretations of risk. Ofsted also focuses primarily on safety but not on risk management or value for money. Senior officials across government have recently met to address the risk of cost-shunting in the expected spending review.

Recommendation: *The Department should develop and lead on a cross-government strategy for raising quality in children's social care, with a cross-government approach agreed by December 2019.*

1 Pressures on children's social care

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Department of Education (the Department) about pressures on children's social care.¹ We also took evidence from two local authorities - Oxfordshire County Council and Northumberland County Council - and a children's charity, the Family Rights Group.

2. Since 2010–11, there has been growth in key types of local authority children's social care activity. Between 2010–11 and 2017–18 there was a 77% increase in child protection assessments, and a 26% increase in the number of cases where local authorities considered actual harm or neglect to have been demonstrated, and had placed children on child protection plans as a result. Over the same period there was also an increase of 15% in the most serious and expensive cases, where children are taken into care.²

3. The increase in cases where children are taken into care has significant financial consequences for individual local authorities. Oxfordshire, for example, has seen a 76% increase in its number of looked-after children over the last four years, and this has contributed to the increase in its spending on children's social care, which has risen to £95 million compared with £46 million 10 years ago.³ Nationally, in 2017–18, local authorities spent £8.8 billion on children's social care. Ninety-one per cent of local authorities overspent on their children's social care in 2017–18, leading to a total national overspend of £872 million. Overspending by local authorities on children's social care has an impact on their financial sustainability as well as on the funding available to other services which they provide.⁴

Variation between local authorities in the activity and cost of children's social care

4. As this Committee has previously reported, the amount of variation that exists between local authorities is wide and concerning.⁵ There is significant variation between local authorities both in the amount of work they do with children in need, and in how much they spend on it. In 2017–18 the rate of children in need episodes ranged from 301 to 1,323 per 10,000 children between local authorities. The number of Section 47 enquiries, conducted where a local authority considers there to be reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their area is either suffering from, or likely to suffer from, serious harm, ranged from 59 to 482 per 10,000 children. There is also wide variation between local authorities in the amount that they spend on children's social care: in 2017–18, the amount spent by local authorities per child in need episode ranged from £566 to £5,166.⁶ Such substantial variation in children's social care is a topic that we have reported on previously: in 2014–15 average spending per child in need ranged between £340 and £4,970 between different local authorities.⁷

1 C&AG's Report, [Pressures on Children's Social Care](#), Session 2017–2019, HC1868, 23 January 2019

2 C&AG's Report, para 1.17

3 Q 1

4 C&AG's Report, Key Facts, para 2.19

5 Committee of Public Accounts, [Child Protection](#), Thirty-first Report of Session 2016–17, HC 713, 16 December 2016.

6 C&AG's Report, para 13, 2.11, 2.14

7 C&AG's Report, [Children in need of help or protection](#), Session 2016–17, HC 723, October 2016, para 1.6

5. The Department acknowledged that it does not yet fully understand variation between local authorities, and accepted that it has not in recent years been doing as much work in this area as it should have been. The Department suggested that this has been because its main effort has been on raising the quality of children's social care. However, the Department also accepted that – with hindsight – since it last appeared before this Committee it should have followed a twin track approach in which it sought to both improve the quality of children's social care and increase its knowledge of the causes of variation between different local authorities.⁸

6. The Department was, however, able to offer some suggestions for the causes of variation between local authorities in their looked-after children populations. The Chief Social Worker shared with the Committee the finding that stronger local authorities – those assessed as “Outstanding” or “Good” by Ofsted – are bringing fewer children into the care system. According to the Chief Social Worker, local authorities with a “Good” or “Outstanding” Ofsted rating have a rate of looked-after children that is between 20% and 30% lower than those with lower Ofsted ratings.⁹

7. To further its understanding of children's social care demand pressures, in late 2017 the Department, together with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and HM Treasury, commissioned research to understand both pressures on and variations between local authorities. This work is due to be completed by summer 2019. The Department's aim is that this research will inform the spending review.¹⁰

8. The NAO's analysis identified explanations for 75% of variations between local authorities, with by far the greatest cause of variation the characteristics of local authorities themselves and their areas. The NAO estimated that these local characteristics account for 44% of the variation, and include custom and practice in children's social care, local market conditions and characteristics of children and their families. The Department noted that its further work with LG Futures should allow greater understanding of the factors behind variation.¹¹

9. Some local authorities have managed to reduce their rates of intervention for care and care proceedings. The Chief Social Worker suggested that the reduction of the rates of intervention depends on the risk appetite of local authorities and the risk appetite depended on the calibre of the workforce, confidence of the workforce, where the local authority is in the inspection cycle and general culture of the organisation and leadership of children's social care.¹²

The sustainability and resource needs of children's social care services

10. The Department was clear that it regards the financial position of local authority children's social care services as unsustainable.¹³ The proportion of local authorities that overspend on children's social care increased from 63% in 2010–11 to 91% in 2017–18. In 2017–18, the total national overspend on children's social care was £872 million.¹⁴ As a

8 Qq 57–58

9 Q 76

10 Qq 53, 86

11 Qq 58–59; C&AG's Report, para 16

12 Qq 72, 77

13 Q 124

14 C&AG's Report, para 15

result of this overspending on children's social care, some councils are drawing on their reserves, and drawing funding from other services – the Department commented: “You cannot carry on like that forever”.¹⁵

11. The Department has only recently become more interested in value for money and sustainability of the sector.¹⁶ As we have previously reported, there is no relationship between spending on child in need and quality, as measured by Ofsted ratings.¹⁷ Indeed, Ofsted does not currently measure the value for money of local authority children's social care services when it inspects them.¹⁸ This contrasts with the Care Quality Commission, for example, which publishes reports which include ratings on how well health bodies use their resources.¹⁹ The Department recognised that the financial situation that councils find themselves in needs to be addressed in the forthcoming spending review.²⁰

12. The Department's What Works Centre for children's social care was recently established and is designed to act as an evidence base for how to best work with families. Similarly, the Department is seeking to encourage local authorities to share good practice in children's social care with its Partners in Practice programme. However, the Department acknowledged that it is only at the beginning of understanding the evidence base for how to most effectively work with families and vulnerable children.²¹

13. As noted above, the analysis which the Department commissioned in 2017 in partnership with other government departments is designed to enable it to be ready for a bid for children's social care funding in the next spending review. The Department stated that this analysis will be necessary to help it bid for the resources that will be necessary for local authorities to cope with forecast increased demand for children's social care.²²

Residential care capacity

14. There has been an increase in the number of children in care who need to be placed in residential homes. Notably, the number of children over 16 taken into care increased by 78% between 2010–11 and 2017–18, from 3,210 to 5,710. According to local authorities, these children often have more complex needs and as a result are harder to place into foster care and are more likely to go into residential care, which is more costly.²³

15. We heard from the directors of children's services of Oxfordshire and Northumberland local authorities that there is not enough capacity in the residential market to meet demand for children with very complex needs.²⁴ Only 32% of local authorities report that they have access to enough residential homes for children aged 14 to 15 years, and 41% for those aged 16 to 17.²⁵ Reflecting this lack of capacity, in 2016 an independent review found that an absence of successful commissioning was resulting in different local authorities

15 Q 124

16 C&AG's Report, para 1.4,

17 Committee of Public Accounts, [Child Protection](#), Session 2016–17, HC 713, 16 December 2016, para 4

18 Qq 99–102

19 See: [Care Quality Commission](#)

20 Q 82

21 Q 94

22 Q 86

23 C&AG's Report, para 9

24 Q 1

25 Natcen Social Research, [Children's Services Omnibus](#), Wave 3 Research Report, commissioned by Department for Education, May 2016

paying widely different prices for the same standard of residential care.²⁶ The scarcity of places means that different local authorities have to fight a “bidding war” against one another for the same placements, with prices increasing as a result.²⁷ This can have extreme financial consequences in individual cases where there is an urgent need to find a placement for a child: Oxfordshire County Council, for example, spent £21,000 housing one child over Christmas 2018. In Northumberland, the cost of placements beyond the county’s boundaries has increased by 116% over the past 3 years.²⁸

16. Limited residential care home capacity has contributed to a significant national increase in the cost of children in care. Although the number of children placed in residential care by local authorities increased by 9.2% between 2013–14 and 2017–18, the cost of residential care increased by 22.5% over the same period, from £1.02 billion to £1.25 billion in real terms.²⁹

17. The Department informed us that it is conducting work to more fully understand local authority commissioning in areas such as fostering and residential care: it was advised on this by Sir Martin Narey, and it is implementing his recommendations. However, the Department also acknowledged that this was an area in which it could potentially take faster action.³⁰ The Department told us that the most cost-effective commissioning is done when councils collaborate with each other; it is helping and funding three local authorities to drive up the quality of their commissioning.³¹

Evidence on the effectiveness of early interventions

18. We heard that early help or intervention can be of great value to vulnerable children, as well as to local authorities in providing them with more options than simply placing children in care. The Family Rights Group told us that in some local authorities, for example, significant work is done with parents before they enter formal court proceedings to assess whether it is possible to place children in wider kinship settings.³² However, they noted that there is significant variation between authorities: some areas focus on supporting parents to keep the child safe and avoid proceedings being taken, whereas others use the period primarily for gathering evidence to support the local authority’s case in court.³³

19. The Department accepted that the “industry” of early intervention has not always led to the commissioning of the right sorts of services and with the right sort of skill level. The Chief Social Worker stated that the early intervention programmes traditionally commissioned by local authorities do not have much of a chance of ever stopping the trajectory of children from families with entrenched difficulties, often across generations, into the high-risk part of the system.³⁴

26 Sir Martin Narey, [Residential care in England](#), Report of Sir Martin Narey’s independent review of children’s residential care, July 2016

27 Q 4

28 Qq 1, 3

29 C&AG’s Report, para 1.27

30 Q 102

31 Q 104

32 Q 38

33 Family Rights Group ([CSR008](#))

34 Q 114

20. The NAO's analysis showed that local authorities which have closed children's centres have not had any consequential increases in child protection plans. Indeed, for those local authorities which had closed centres there was a slight fall in the number of child protection plans in future years. Local authorities have reduced spending on preventative children's services.³⁵

21. To expand the evidence base for what works in all aspects of children's social care, the Department has launched the What Works Centre. This is designed to be a national institution holding intelligence on all good practice in children's social care, including early intervention. The Department is only beginning to understand this evidence base through the What Works Centre, as it has not previously made a concerted, continual effort to understand what families need.³⁶

35 C&AG's Report, paras 17, 3.21

36 Q 94

2 Departmental oversight

The Department's 2022 goal

22. In 2016, in *Putting Children First*, the Department committed to deliver a programme of reform in children's social care. The policy goal was originally stated as that: "By 2020 our ambition is that all vulnerable children, no matter where they live, receive the same high quality of care and support, and the best outcome for every child is at the heart of every decision made." However, the Department has subsequently put back the delivery date for this programme to 2022. The Department told us that it took the decision to defer the target date because, following the Committee's report in 2016, it acknowledged that it did not have a detailed plan and trajectory in place.³⁷

23. Similarly, the Department has made only limited progress in improving the quality of children's social care services. In 2013, Ofsted assessed 65% of local authority children's services as either "Inadequate" or "Requires improvement to be good." In 2018, this figure fell only marginally, with 58% of local authorities rated as "Inadequate" or "Requires improvement to be good". The Department accepted that having nearly 60% of local authorities rated lower than "Good" by Ofsted for children's social care is "terrible". It did, however, point out that the number of local authorities rated as "Inadequate" had fallen from 30 to 19.³⁸

24. The Department said that it is now confident that it has put the actions in place that mean it will achieve its target by 2022. Despite this, the Department was not able to set out either the overall level of quality it is seeking to achieve in children's social care, or how it will measure this. The Department would not, for example, commit to how many local authorities it would be comfortable with failing their Ofsted inspections for children's social services by 2022.³⁹

Cross-government collaboration

25. The complex needs of vulnerable children mean that, at a local level, a number of different agencies are often involved in their care. We heard from our witnesses that these can include the police, housing, courts, the Department for Work & Pensions and local health services. These agencies can work together effectively or can also be at odds with one another – often this is dependent on the level of risk that different agencies feel comfortable taking on with relation to vulnerable children.⁴⁰ Changes in risk appetite between local authorities and courts are exemplified in the large rise in the number of care order applications, with a rise of 56% from 2010–11 to 2017–18.⁴¹

26. At the national level, there is some evidence of cross-Departmental co-operation ahead of the spending review. The Department told us how it has commissioned, with MHCLG and HM Treasury, analysis on what drives demand pressures for children's social care. MHCLG is involved as it oversees the Government's overall relationship with local government. HM Treasury is involved as the Department considers there is

37 Q 122

38 Q 104, Q119; C&AG's Report, para 2.17

39 Q 122

40 Qq 9, 10, 19, 38

41 Q 107; C&AG's Report, Figure 5

no point in doing work to support the expected spending review that Treasury does not know about.⁴² Another example of co-operation has been in cross-governmental work to counter the risk of cost-shunting.⁴³ There are also conversations with local authority chief executives, the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Care to understand pressures, such as those on courts which prompted the Care Crisis Review. One witness also told us of 'huge variation' in the co-operation from partner agencies in relation to local collaboration. We also heard about the welfare reforms, led by the Department of Work & Pensions, where the impact on demand for children's social care is not well understood. Yet, despite the inherently cross-governmental nature of children's social care, the Department has sole departmental policy responsibility for children's social care.⁴⁴

42 Q 86

43 Q 68

44 Qq 6, 26, 45, 52

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 13 March 2019

Members present:

Meg Hillier, in the Chair

Chris Evans Shabana Mahmood

Caroline Flint

Draft Report (*Transforming children's services*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 26 read and agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Eighty-eighth of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Monday 18 March at 3:30pm]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 4 February 2019

Lucy Butler, Director of Children's Services, Oxfordshire County Council,
Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's
Services, and **Cathy Ashley**, CEO, Family Rights Group

[Q1–50](#)

Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary, **Indra Morris**, Director General,
Social Care, Mobility and Equalities, Department for Education, and
Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, Department
for Education

[Q51–138](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

CSR numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Barnardo's ([CSR0002](#))
- 2 Blavatnik School of Government ([CSR0004](#))
- 3 Bywaters, Professor Paul ([CSR0009](#))
- 4 Children's Services Development Group ([CSR0003](#))
- 5 The Children's Society ([CSR0007](#))
- 6 Disabled Children's Partnership ([CSR0005](#))
- 7 Family Rights Group ([CSR0008](#))
- 8 The Fostering Network ([CSR0010](#))
- 9 Local Government Association ([CSR0001](#))
- 10 West Sussex County Council ([CSR0006](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliaments

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number .

Session 2017–19

First Report	Tackling online VAT fraud and error	HC 312 (Cm 9549)
Second Report	Brexit and the future of Customs	HC 401 (Cm 9565)
Third Report	Hinkley Point C	HC 393 (Cm 9565)
Fourth Report	Clinical correspondence handling at NHS Shared Business Services	HC 396 (Cm 9575)
Fifth Report	Managing the costs of clinical negligence in hospital trusts	HC 397 (Cm 9575)
Sixth Report	The growing threat of online fraud	HC 399 (Cm 9575)
Seventh Report	Brexit and the UK border	HC 558 (Cm 9575)
Eighth Report	Mental health in prisons	HC 400 (Cm 9575) (Cm 9596)
Ninth Report	Sheffield to Rotherham tram-trains	HC 453 (Cm 9575)
Tenth Report	High Speed 2 Annual Report and Accounts	HC 454 (Cm 9575)
Eleventh Report	Homeless households	HC 462 (Cm 9575) (Cm 9618)
Twelfth Report	HMRC's Performance in 2016–17	HC 456 (Cm 9596)
Thirteenth Report	NHS continuing healthcare funding	HC 455 (Cm 9596)
Fourteenth Report	Delivering Carrier Strike	HC 394 (Cm 9596)
Fifteenth Report	Offender-monitoring tags	HC 458 (Cm 9596)
Sixteenth Report	Government borrowing and the Whole of Government Accounts	HC 463 (Cm 9596)
Seventeenth Report	Retaining and developing the teaching workforce	HC 460 (Cm 9596)
Eighteenth Report	Exiting the European Union	HC 467 (Cm 9596)

Nineteenth Report	Excess Votes 2016–17	HC 806 (Cm 9596)
Twentieth Report	Update on the Thameslink Programme	HC 466 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-First Report	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Magnox	HC 461 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Second Report	The monitoring, inspection and funding of Learndirect Ltd.	HC 875 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Third Report	Alternative Higher Education Providers	HC 736 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Fourth Report	Care Quality Commission: regulating health and social care	HC 468 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Fifth Report	The sale of the Green Investment Bank	HC 468 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Sixth Report	Governance and departmental oversight of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership	HC 896 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Seventh Report	Government contracts for Community Rehabilitation Companies	HC 897 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Eighth Report	Ministry of Defence: Acquisition and support of defence equipment	HC 724 (Cm 9618)
Twenty-Ninth Report	Sustainability and transformation in the NHS	HC 793 (Cm 9618)
Thirtieth Report	Academy schools' finances	HC 760 (Cm 9618)
Thirty-First Report	The future of the National Lottery	HC 898 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Second Report	Cyber-attack on the NHS	HC 787 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Third Report	Research and Development funding across government	HC 668 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Fourth Report	Exiting the European Union: The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	HC 687 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Fifth Report	Rail franchising in the UK	HC 689 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Sixth Report	Reducing modern slavery	HC 886 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Seventh Report	Exiting the European Union: The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and the Department for International Trade	HC 699 (Cm 9643)
Thirty-Eighth Report	The adult social care workforce in England	HC 690 (Cm 9667)
Thirty-Ninth Report	The Defence Equipment Plan 2017–2027	HC 880 (Cm 9667)
Fortieth Report	Renewable Heat Incentive in Great Britain	HC 696 (Cm 9667)

Forty-First Report	Government risk assessments relating to Carillion	HC 1045 (Cm 9667)
Forty-Second Report	Modernising the Disclosure and Barring Service	HC 695 (Cm 9667)
Forty-Third Report	Clinical correspondence handling in the NHS	HC 929 (Cm 9702)
Forty-Fourth Report	Reducing emergency admissions	HC 795 (Cm 9702)
Forty-Fifth Report	The higher education market	HC 693 (Cm 9702)
Forty-Sixth Report	Private Finance Initiatives	HC 894 (Cm 9702)
Forty-Seventh Report	Delivering STEM skills for the economy	HC 691 (Cm 9702)
Forty-Eighth Report	Exiting the EU: The financial settlement	HC 973 (Cm 9702)
Forty-Ninth Report	Progress in tackling online VAT fraud	HC 1304 (Cm 9702)
Fiftieth Report	Financial sustainability of local authorities	HC 970 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-First Report	BBC commercial activities	HC 670 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Second Report	Converting schools to academies	HC 697 (CCm 9702)
Fifty-Third Report	Ministry of Defence's contract with Annington Property Limited	HC 974 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Fourth Report	Visit to Washington DC	HC 1404 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Fifth Report	Employment and Support Allowance	HC 975 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Sixth Report	Transforming courts and tribunals	HC 976 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Seventh Report	Supporting Primary Care Services: NHS England's contract with Capita	HC 698 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Eighth Report	Strategic Suppliers	HC 1031 (Cm 9702)
Fifty-Ninth Report	Skill shortages in the Armed Forces	HC 1027 (9740)
Sixtieth Report	Ofsted's inspection of schools	HC1029 (Cm 9740)
Sixty-First Report	Ministry of Defence nuclear programme	HC 1028 (Cm 9740)

Sixty-Second Report	Price increases for generic medications	HC 1184 (Cm 9740)
Sixty-Third Report	Interface between health and social care	HC 1376 (Cm 9740)
Sixty-Fourth Report	Universal Credit	HC 1375
Sixty-Fifth Report	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority	HC 1375
Sixty-Sixth Report	HMRC's performance in 2017–18	HC 1526
Sixty-Seventh Report	Financial Sustainability of police forces in England and Wales	HC 1513
Sixty-Eighth Report	Defra's progress towards Brexit	HC 1514
Sixty-Ninth Report	Sale of student loans	HC 1527
Seventieth Report	Department for Transport's implementation of Brexit	HC 1657
Seventy-First Report	Department for Health and Social Care accounts	HC 1515
Seventy-Second Report	Mental health services for children and young people	HC 1593
Seventy-Third Report	Academy accounts and performance	HC 1597
Seventy-Fourth Report	Whole of Government accounts	HC 464
Seventy-Fifth Report	Pre-appointment hearing: preferred candidate for Comptroller and Auditor General	HC 1883
Seventy-Sixth Report	Local Government Spending	HC 1775
Seventy-Seventh Report	Defence Equipment Plan 2018–28	HC 1519
Seventy-Eighth Report	Improving Government planning and spending	HC 1596
Seventy-Ninth Report	Excess Votes 2017–18	HC 1931
Eightieth Report	Capita's contracts with the Ministry of Defence	HC 1736
Eighty-First Report	Rail management and timetabling	HC 1793
Eighty-Second Report	Windrush generation and the Home Office	HC 1518
Eighty-Third Report	Clinical Commissioning Groups	HC 1740
Eighty-Fourth Report	Bank of England's central services	HC 1739

Eighty-Fifth Report	Auditing local government	HC 1738
Eighty-Sixth Report	Brexit and the UK border: further progress review	HC 1942
Eighty-Seventh Report	Renewing the EastEnders set	HC 1737
First Special Report	Chair of the Public Accounts Committee's Second Annual Report	HC 347
Second Special Report	Third Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 1399