

Submission of evidence: Children and Families Act 2014

For the House of Lords Select Committee, 25/04/2022

What we want to see from the government in the next six months:

1. Make sure people under the age of 18 can join in with policy discussions.
2. Make it easier for people to find out if their child can have free school meals.
3. Make sure that there are ways for everyone to access, understand and respond to the Act. Ask all sorts of different people how to do that best.
4. Once everyone has had a chance to understand the Act it should be checked and changed again if needed.
5. The offices of the Children's Commissioner should work with local offices more, so that more people can be involved and their opinions can be heard.
6. Learn from good examples of co-production (for example The [Resilience Revolution](#), [Blackpool Beating Bullying](#), [principles of integrated care](#), and '[Health as a Social Movement](#)'). Co-production is where people with different types of experience work together as equals to make decisions.

What we want to see from the government in the next year:

1. Get stories of how the legislation is working in real life for people from across the UK. (see Part 2.6).
2. Give free school meals to all pupils in areas where there are lots of people facing difficulties.
3. Make a co-produced disability and/or mental health 'passport' that is accepted everywhere.
4. Co-produce a formal plan to make it easier for people to get the support that they are allowed from places like school, healthcare and social services, outlined in Part 3: Sections 22/30.
5. Local Authority officers should help with jobs and other life goals for children who are looked after.
6. When the government makes decisions about what they will focus on, it should be a legal requirement to include young people and families in those decisions. It should be clear how those young people and families will be paid for their time.
7. Local authorities should co-produce ways to reduce the numbers of children in long term stay units, which are separating children and young people from their families and communities.
8. Check [Part 10: Section 138](#) of the Act and make changes if needed to make sure co-production work gets given enough money, time and attention.