

the **dialogue...**

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agenda

- Bitesize & Projects
 - What would we like to focus our time on – small groups
- Snap survey – **bitesize topics for 2025**
- In the news...
 - Children Wellbeing & Schools Bill
- Inspection top tips & **care planning**
- Next week's bitesize – **Missing People**



Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill

- Published 17th December 2024
- Response to the Care Review and implementation of Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive
- First half focus on improving social care and early intervention
- Second half around residential care
- Schools a late addition...



Staying close

- Rolled out from a series of pilots that have gone well. Statutory guidance will follow – 3 year implementation plan
- Assess whether required for former relevant children up to age 25
- If required, provide support to extent their welfare requires it
- Trusted person
- Find and keep long term stable accommodation
- Essential wraparound services that help young people thrive

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Local offer for care leavers

- Housing & children's services in particular
- Ensure a planned and supportive transition between care and independent living for all care leavers
- Requires publication of the offer including anticipating future needs for accommodation, cooperation with housing authorities and assistance to care leavers at risk of homelessness



Regional Care Cooperatives

- SoS can direct LAs to make arrangements if they do not do these voluntarily
- Assess current and future needs
- Develop and publish strategy
- Commission or develop accommodation
- Recruit foster carers



Accommodation for depriving liberty

- Community based registered children's homes with therapeutic care
- Permissive, fluctuating, needs-led restrictions – maximum will be approved, minimum will be used
- Only where young people abscond and are at risk of significant harm to self or injury to others
- Reduce DoL orders under inherent jurisdiction – instead time-limited court authorised deprivation of liberty (s25) subject to regular review (or further application)

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Improvement Notices

- An improvement plan notice can be served on a parent company if the chief inspector has reasonable grounds (guidance says suspicion) for cancelling their registrations of two or more settings
- Ofsted can work “at scale and pace”
- Potential fines and refusal of further registrations for noncompliance



Monetary penalties

- Penalties for areas that could already be an offence, e.g. not registering
- Unlimited fines taking into account provider's previous record, severity of breach and impact on children
- Works in conjunction with the provider oversight regime where a group refuses or fails to make improvements
- Right of appeal to tribunal
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Financial oversight

- Secretary of State (SoS) may make regulations that provide for a 12 month oversight period for individuals
- Provider must be of 'strategic significance' in relation to number of settings, size of settings, geographical concentration or market share.
- Allows SoS to request information on risk and financial sustainability, risk mitigation, potential impact on LAs and children and actions they can take to minimise this
- SoS can also commission an independent business review if they perceive a significant risk
- Duty on SoS to issue advance warning notices to relevant LAs
- Potential fines and 'fitness' findings if non-compliant
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Profit limitation

- Wide reaching powers, after considering welfare/health of sector and appropriate consultation, to create regulation that sets out the way profit is calculated, set a cap, determine and adjust for disguised profit (if the aim is simply to reduce profit).
- The SoS may create a statutory annual return and issue penalties for non compliance.
- “We are clear that we are not seeking to eliminate profit-making entirely. There will continue to be a place for profit making providers in the market.”



Wilful neglect

- Wilful neglect in a care setting has been extended to include 16/17 year olds in registered settings
- Previously only extended to health and adult social care
- Under 16s covered by s1 CYPA 1933 'cruelty'
- Addresses 'low level' abuse (ill-treatment or wilful neglect) in regulated children's residential care

