



Somerset
Council

Somerset Council
Children and Families' Scrutiny Committee
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Introduction to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools' Bill and the Children's Social Care National Reforms

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Division / Local Member: n/a

1. Summary

The **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill** is a piece of proposed legislation introduced by the government in December 2024. Its main goals are to improve child safety and raise educational standards, specifically in relation to:

1. **Safeguarding and Welfare:** The Bill aims to enhance the safeguarding and welfare of children, including support for children in care or leaving care.
2. **Education Reforms:** It proposes changes to the school system, such as universal breakfast clubs in primary schools, school uniform costs, requiring academies to follow the national curriculum and giving local authorities more power over school admissions.
3. **Teacher Pay:** The Bill includes provisions to ensure a minimum pay floor for academy teachers.
4. **Home Schooling:** The Bill introduces measures to regulate home schooling, particularly for families under child protection investigations or where children have left a special school.
5. **Multi-Agency Safeguarding:** The Bill mandates the inclusion of education and childcare agencies in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

1.1 The Children's Social Care Reforms

1. **Early Intervention:** The reforms aim to shift the focus towards early intervention to help families before problems escalate, keeping children with their families whenever possible.
2. **Financial Transparency:** New rules will require key placements providers to share their finances with the government to tackle excessive profits and ensure better use of resources.
3. **Support for Kinship Care:** The reforms include a national kinship care strategy to support family networks providing loving and stable homes to children.
4. **Multi-agency child protection teams:** The reforms require children's social care, the police, the education sector and the ICB to develop joint child protection teams, based in communities
5. **Improved Outcomes:** The overall goal is to transform children's social care to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families

A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset including Somerset Children and Young People's Plan [Somerset Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2030](#)

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. Issues for consideration:

- information about the proposals in the Bill and the National Reforms
- the current position in Somerset in relation to these and
- the potential impact of the Bill and the Reforms for children in Somerset.

3. Background

- 3.1.** The Bill and the Reforms are the government's response to:
1. National safeguarding reports which reference the safety of some children who are educated at home
 2. Embedding an early help approach across much of the public sector in relation to vulnerable people
 3. A desire to improve information sharing and multi-agency working for children at risk of harm, based on deficit findings of numerous safeguarding reviews
 4. A different political ideology, compared to that of the previous government, about the role of education and the most appropriate education systems and structures

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** Not applicable

5. Implications

- 5.1.**
- Wholesale reform of Children's Social Care services nationally
 - Impact of change of political ideology in education nationally

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** PowerPoint presentation as PDF - Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (including Children's Social Care Reforms)