

[Potential logo/slogan – to be decided by COMMS]

Pledge by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 December 1991

Ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 24 June 2003

Ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography on 20 February 2009



Pledges

1. A wide range of pledges: please see the document "[CRC@30: Policy initiatives contributing to the promotion, protection and realisation of children's rights.](#)"

The following plans are made to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention:

1. **Fund and host a Parliamentary reception on 13 November**, which will both celebrate achievements in the area of children's rights over the last 30 years and consider what must happen next to keep making progress with children's rights.
2. **Produce an infographic for use in the run up to the 30th anniversary**, showing key children's rights milestones since 1992.
3. Use the occasion of CRC@30 to **promote across government departments our online children's rights training** and Child Rights Impact Assessments template.
4. **Add the CRC@30 label to Department for Education initiatives.**
5. Organize the **Northern Alliance conference** involving children and young people from the North and West of Scotland on 24 June 2019.
6. Hold **sessions with the Scottish Youth Parliament** on 16 July 2019, Youthlink on 18 July 2019 and Children's Parliament and Children in Scotland in July 2019. Children 1st and Young Scot have also been invited to host an event.
7. **Work with disability organizations** to provide a bespoke event for children with disabilities and young people.

8. **Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2018-2021**, which was published in December 2018, includes:
 - a. 5 Rights Café Consultation Events during April 2019.
 - b. 2 Public Authority Events to support the development of their children’s rights reports.
 - c. 1 Mini Rights Café Event in Dumfries – August/September TBC
 - d. Development of a Raising Awareness of Children’s Rights – Co-production group (made up of children, young people and stakeholders).
9. **A Human Rights debate in the Scottish Parliament**, which is due to take place around Human Rights Day on 10 December, will also highlight the 30th anniversary and the Scottish Ministers’ commitment to further taking forward the rights of the child.
10. **Scottish Ministers will continue to look for opportunities to promote public awareness and understanding of the rights of the child**, including specific messaging celebrating the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC.

Note: The Scotland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and the Government of Wales Act 1998 (which was later effectively superseded by the Government of Wales Act 2006) established the three devolved legislatures and transferred to them some powers that were previously held at Westminster. Further powers have been devolved since these original acts, most recently through the Scotland Act 2016 and Wales Act 2017.

1) In light of the commitments we have made under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, as applicable, we have undertaken the following to highlight our commitment to the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of the child in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention:

In response to this question, the UK would like to share the attached document, which provides comprehensive details on policy initiatives contributing to the promotion, protection and realisation of children’s rights.

2) We have made the following plans to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention:

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was ratified by the UK in 1991. The UK government is committed to the protection, promotion, and realisation of children’s rights and will play an active role in CRC@30.

We will:

- **Fund and host a Parliamentary reception on 13 November.** This will be a joint initiative with the Children’s Rights Alliance for England, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Unicef UK. Through a combination of speeches, networking opportunities, interactive activities and take away resources, the event will both celebrate achievements in the area of children’s rights over the last 30 years and consider what must happen next to keep making progress with children’s rights. The

event will be aimed at parliamentarians (across all political parties), civil society organisations and government officials. Children and young people will also be invited to attend and participate. We are expecting around 100 attendees.

- **Produce an infographic for use in the run up to the 30th anniversary**, showing key children's rights milestones since 1992.
- Use the occasion of CRC@30 to **promote across government departments our online children's rights training** and Child Rights Impact Assessments template.
- **Add the CRC@30 label to Department for Education initiatives** during 2019/20 which will contribute to the realisation of children's rights, and encourage other government departments to do the same.

Consultation activity in relation to the commitment to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law will also serve to raise awareness of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC. Planned events involving children and young people include:

- **The Northern Alliance conference** involving children and young people from the North and West of Scotland on 24 June 2019.
- **Sessions with the Scottish Youth Parliament** on 16 July 2019, Youthlink on 18 July 2019 and Children's Parliament and Children in Scotland in July 2019.
- Children 1st and Young Scot have also been invited to host an event.
- We will also **work with disability organisations** to provide a bespoke event for disabled children and young people.

The commitment to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law is included within our **Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2018-2021**, which was published in December 2018. The Action Plan also includes the commitment to develop through co-production, an ambitious programme to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights. Events held in relation to this action will be used to raise awareness of the 30th anniversary. These include:

- 5 Rights Café Consultation Events during April 2019 – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Stirling and Inverness
- 2 Public Authority Events to support the development of their children's rights reports (Dates TBC)
- 1 Mini Rights Café Event in Dumfries – August/September TBC
- Development of a Raising Awareness of Children's Rights – Co-production group (made up of children, young people and stakeholders)

An update on progress made in taking forward the actions in the Action Plan will be published in the autumn 2019. All of our communications around this publication will particularly highlight the 30th anniversary.

A Human Rights debate in the Scottish Parliament, which is due to take place around Human Rights Day on 10 December, will also highlight the 30th anniversary and the Scottish Ministers' commitment to further taking forward the rights of the child.

In line with duties under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, **Scottish Ministers will continue to look for opportunities to promote public awareness and understanding of the rights of the child**, including amongst children and young people. During 2019, this also includes **specific messaging celebrating the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC**.

Annexe



HM Government

CRC@30

Policy initiatives contributing to the promotion, protection and realisation of children's rights

August 2019

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Foreword

In 1998 The Scotland Act, the Northern Ireland Act, and the Government of Wales Act established the three devolved legislatures and transferred to them some powers that were previously held at Westminster. Further powers have been devolved since these original acts, most recently through the Scotland Act 2016 and Wales Act 2017. The UK's devolution settlement means that the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for observing and implementing international obligations relating to devolved matters, which they do in consultation and agreement with the FCO or the relevant UK Government Department, to ensure consistency. More generally, international relations, which would include the negotiation of new international rights, is reserved to the UK.

Introduction

As part of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UK reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and realisation of children's rights. The UK ratified the Convention in 1991 and the whole of the UK Government works to realise children's rights. Internationally, the UK plays an active role in the protection of children's rights, is the largest bilateral financial contributor to the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict and we continue to work with multilateral partners to ensure the protection of children's rights is an priority for UN peacekeeping missions.

Following the request made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on 8 March 2019, this document sets out the broad scope of UK commitments and initiatives that contribute to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This document covers the work of a number of UK Government departments, but it is not an exhaustive presentation. The Department for Education, who oversees UK domestic implementation of the UNCRC, has prepared this report to give an overview of the UK's efforts to protect the rights of children and the importance that the UK continues to place on the issue. It covers the main areas of work and highlights department-level initiatives and policies leading work particularly relevant to realising children's rights.

Department for Education (DfE)

As the department with primary responsibility for children, the vast majority of the department's work contributes to realising, strengthening and protecting children's rights. The list below highlights some of the department's recent key initiatives.

Comprehensive information on the work of the department can be found on the [departmental website](#).

Recent key initiatives

- [Hungry little minds campaign](#): a new three-year national campaign, with the aim of supporting parents in accelerating their child's learning at home. The campaign lists some easy to implement ideas for parents to aid their child's language and literacy skills before they start school.
- Initiatives to improve the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.
 - Publication of [research and system mapping](#) looking at what influences wellbeing.
 - [National mental health programme between schools and NHS](#) to offer training and strengthened partnership between school and college staff and NHS professionals, encouraging them to work together, sharing their expertise and making sure they have the information they need so that more pupils get the right help at the right time.
- [Multi-million pound investment](#) in preparations for the introduction of new technical qualifications in September 2020.
More information is available in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy section of this paper.
- Proposals and public consultation on the [review and overhaul of technical and vocational education](#), so students and employers understand Higher Technical Qualifications – particular STEM qualifications - and see them as high-quality and valued alternatives to a traditional academic route.
- Thousands more pupils will have the opportunity to study in [new free schools to be opened in underperforming areas](#), aiming to help raise standards and give parents more choice.
- The schools admission code will be changed so that the most vulnerable children, such as those fleeing domestic abuse, can access a school place more quickly under [Government plans to prevent the most vulnerable children missing out on school and raising the visibility of those who have needed a social worker](#).
- [Programme to improve access to the top independent schools for children in care](#), including access to sporting and music facilities, to help harness specific aspirations or talents, such as swimming or music, to help boost opportunities, outcomes and aspirations for these young people.
- Through the Social Care Innovation Programme invitations have been made to local authorities to participate in:

- [Supporting Families: investing in practice](#), testing the Mockingbird Family Model
 - [Strengthening families, protecting children](#), a variety of projects helping safely reduce the number of children entering care
- Key statutory guidance updated so far during 2019:
 - For schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment: [Keeping children safe in education](#).
 - On inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: [Working together to safeguard children](#).
 - On how to support children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties who are at risk of restrictive intervention: [Reducing the need for restraint and restrictive intervention](#). Alongside a public consultation on further guidance on the use of [Restraint in mainstream settings and alternative provision](#).
 - For local authorities on the provision of early education and childcare: [Early education and childcare](#).
 - Other key guidance published so far in 2019:
 - [Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education](#): schools encouraged to adopt from September 2019, mandatory from September 2020.
 - A self-assessment tool designed to help schools improve the health and wellbeing of their pupils: [Healthy schools rating scheme](#).

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is responsible for the UK's Industrial Strategy. [The People Foundation of the Strategy](#) gives important context and focus for the way that children's education will contribute to their future role in UK society.

The Strategy recognises that STEM skills will drive the modern economies of the future, and that we must tackle a shortage of STEM skills. Technology is transforming the job market and the way we work, so we must also invest in our workforce and embed a culture of career-long learning.

Government is providing an [additional £406m investment, particularly in maths, digital and technical education, to help address the shortage of STEM skills](#), now and in the future. This includes:

- £84m for a comprehensive programme to improve teaching and participation in computer science;
- over £80m to incentivise education institutions to offer maths at AS/A Level or core maths to increase the number of students studying maths at age 16 and over;
- £27m to expand the successful 'Teaching for Mastery' maths programme;
- £350,000 annual funding for every maths school to help expand the specialist maths school model; and

T Levels:

- Government will be introducing the new T-Levels – technical education equivalent to A Levels – from September 2020 and they will be fully rolled out by September 2023.
- T-levels will be supported by over £500m annually by the time the programme is fully rolled out. This will ensure we can increase by over 50% the number of hours training for 16-19 years old T-level students, including a high-quality work placement – putting our technical education system on par with the best in the world.
- We will build capacity to deliver T levels and strengthen technical education through investment of up to £20m over 2018-19 and 2019-20 in the FE teaching profession.
- We are committed to extending the reform of technical education up to higher levels. Following a review of higher-level technical education (at levels 4 and 5), we will be introducing new qualifications in this area in order to better address the needs of learners and employers.

Cabinet Office (CO)

The Government remains committed to involving young people in the political process and recognises the importance of children and young people feeling engaged in decision making. The UK Government does this in many different ways, from citizenship education and a National Youth Parliament, through to gaining the views of children and young people on specific areas of legislation; for example, recent changes in mental health provision.

In December 2017, we published our first ever democratic engagement plan, '[Every Voice Matters: Building A Democracy That Works For Everyone](#)'. The plan focusses on:

- Tackling democratic exclusion and increasing participation among under registered groups. One year on, the Government's follow up report, '[Democratic Engagement: Respecting, Protecting and Promoting Our Democracy](#)', sets out progress against these commitments. The Government has also developed a collection of free online learning resources to enable different groups, including young people, to discuss the importance of democratic participation and registering to vote. For example, [Rock Enroll](#), which is aimed at 16-19 year olds and uses a range of interactive exercises to engage young people in the democratic process.

The Government also actively uses [high profile events to further boost engagement](#) among young people in England. For instance, we worked together with organisations from across the public, private and charity sectors for a week of unified national action during the National Democracy Week in July 2018 in order to increase the number of people who understand and take part in our democratic process.

We are also delivering targeted projects under the '[Educate](#)' [theme of the Suffrage Centenary Programme and Fund](#). These projects aim to increase knowledge of UK democracy and its importance, particularly amongst disenfranchised young people (13-16). This includes young people from hard-to-reach populations, including ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups. For example:

- We have worked with partners to develop a toolkit, with resources for parliamentarians to use when engaging with 13-16 year olds — for example, when visiting schools, youth clubs and engaging with young people on social media.
- We have overseen the Democracy Ambassadors scheme: a peer-to-peer engagement programme that teaches young people about democracy and equips them with the skills to share what they have learnt with their peers. This programme will train 1,000 ambassadors who will each be tasked with talking to 100 of their peers.
- A Schools Resource that aims to increase knowledge of the history of the suffrage movement and to use that knowledge base to improve pupils' understanding of UK democracy. This extends the history and citizenship modules in the National Curriculum, and includes a particular focus on the history and importance of women's suffrage.
- We also work in partnership with numerous civil society organisations, such as UK Youth, British Youth Council and Operation Black Vote, to increase democratic engagement among young people across the UK.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

General information on UK data protection laws and the child is at **Annex A**.

Youth Charter

In April 2019, the UK Government announced it would be developing a [Youth Charter](#), which will set out a bold and compelling ten-year vision for young people in England.

The charter will reaffirm our commitment to give young people a strong voice on the issues they care about, such as combating serious violence and knife crime, addressing mental and physical health challenges, and concerns about the environment and climate change.

We will develop the charter with young people, incorporating their creativity, energy and ideas to help come up with solutions.

Protection of children in the online environment

The [Online Harms White Paper](#), published in April 2019, sets out our plans to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. The Paper will make companies more responsible for their users' safety online, especially children and other vulnerable groups.

As outlined in the White Paper, we intend to establish, in law, a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. This regulator will set clear safety standards, backed up by mandatory reporting requirements and effective enforcement powers.

Companies will be held to account for tackling a comprehensive set of online harms. The new regulator will set out steps companies should take to tackle harms including cyberbullying and suicidal and self-harm content online. Companies will also be required to take robust action when there is evidence that children are accessing inappropriate content online.

The regulator will also have the power to require annual transparency reports from companies in scope, outlining the prevalence of harmful content on their platforms and what measures they are taking to address this. These reports will be published online by the regulator, so that users and parents can make informed decisions about online use.

We also know that users want to be empowered to keep themselves and their children safe online, but currently there is insufficient support in place and many feel vulnerable.

The Government will also develop a [new online media literacy strategy](#). We will develop this in consultation with stakeholders, including major digital, broadcast and news media organisations, the education sector, researchers and civil society. This strategy will ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to online media literacy education and awareness for children, young people and adults.

The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), a collaborative forum across Government, the tech community and civil society, will also deliver a range of measures to support children's online safety including creating updated guidance to schools on sexting, and evaluation of online safety provision, and for Initial Teacher Training providers to help them upskill new teachers in online safety.

The Government will also be taking steps to tackle children accessing inappropriate content including:

- The introduction of age verification requirements for all commercial online pornography sites to prevent access by children and young people under 18;
- Companies will be required to take robust action when there is evidence that children are accessing inappropriate content.
- The Government is developing a one stop shop to help companies keep children safe online and technical guidance for companies.

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse

While it will be the responsibility of the new regulator to produce codes of practice when it becomes operational, the Government expects companies to take action now to tackle harmful content or activity on their services. For those harms, where there is a risk to the physical safety of children, such as online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), we will expect companies to go much further and demonstrate the steps taken to combat the dissemination of associated content and illegal behaviours. We will publish an interim code of practice providing guidance about tackling online CSEA later this year.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Defra and young people

In our 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP) published in 2018, the Government set out a plan for how the natural environment will be protected and enhanced for our, and future, generations. The plan commits to action in support of ten major environmental goals. One of the actions it commits to is to help children and young people from all backgrounds engage with nature and improve the environment.

Defra has pledged, via the #iwill campaign and as part of the [2019 Year of Green Action](#), to explore how we can take into account the voice of young people in development of environmental policies that safeguard their future.

As part of this, and following the publication of the first progress report on the 25 YEP, Government would like to understand the views and priorities of young people with regard to the future direction of environment policy.

The Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has invited the [Youth Steering Group](#) to conduct a review of environment and climate policy.

The Youth Steering Group is a group of young people aged 14-24, brought together for the first time in 2019 by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and led by the British Youth Council.

For the first time, young people will have the chance to shape our future climate and environment policy through the Youth Steering Group review. The Group will advise Government on priorities for environmental action and give a view on progress to date against existing commitments on climate, waste and recycling, and biodiversity loss. It will also consider how Government can better capture the views of young people as it develops environment and climate policy.

In addition to the Youth Steering Group review, we are implementing a commitment in Government our [25 Year Environment Plan](#) to encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school. The Plan recognises that playing and learning outside is a fundamental part of childhood and supports children's mental health and wellbeing. It also highlights that some children have good access to natural spaces, whilst others do not, such as those living in areas of high disadvantage.

Defra, Natural England and the Department for Education are working together to launch and oversee the £10 million Children and Nature Programme which aims to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have better access to natural environments to support their mental health and wellbeing. This major new programme will run until spring 2023, helping schools with the highest proportions of disadvantaged pupils provide greener grounds and pupil visits to green spaces. It will also support the scaling up of work carried out by care farms and community woodlands to further support children in disadvantaged areas. One of the programme aims is to improve understanding of the effectiveness of interventions in nature, through an independent evaluation.

Action on Air Quality

The case for taking strong and decisive action to reduce the impacts of poor air quality on children is clear. Exposure to air pollution in early life can have a long-lasting effect on lung function.

The air quality factors that affect children's health reflect a complex mix of sources and activities that must be tackled through a broad and systematic programme of work that extends beyond individual actions or localised issues. Any action focussed on children and vulnerable groups should be part of a wider programme of action that seeks to take a systemic approach to the issue.

Clean Air Strategy, published January 2019

The Government's Clean Air Strategy, which sets out an ambitious and comprehensive programme of action and commitments to tackle air pollution from multiple sources to improve air quality for all, including children and vulnerable groups. This will include new and ambitious goals, legislation, investment and policies, which will help us to clean up our air faster and more effectively.

Environment Bill, to be introduced in the Second Session of this Parliament

The UK Government is introducing new legislation, outlining a strengthened, up to date legislative framework for tackling air pollution. This framework will be underpinned by England-wide action to control major sources of air pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment, together with improved local powers to take action in areas with an air pollution problem.

Air quality provisions in the upcoming Environment Bill build on the 25 Year Environment Plan and implement a range of the measures outlined in the Government's Clean Air Strategy 2019. The principal aim of these proposals is to enable stronger, more effective action to be taken on addressing the health impacts associated with poor air quality. As part of this, we will look to amend the Clean Air Act 1993 to make it a more effective and proportionate means of tackling domestic burning – the single largest contributor to our national particulate matter emissions and particulate matter is the pollutant with the most significant impact on human health. We will also amend the Environment Act 1995 as a means of revising the current Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework and thereby strengthening the ability for local authorities to take action to improve air quality for all.

Public awareness raising

The Government needs to improve the level of public understanding on air quality. To do that we have a number of public awareness and knowledge raising measures in place. They include local authorities focus on a range of interventions, such as working with children and their parents to implement no-idling zones outside schools, making it easy for children to walk or cycle to school, and increase public awareness in relation to air pollution and children.

To further support local authorities and other stakeholders, Public Health England's next step will be to produce additional tailored material that elaborates upon the evidence to support an improvement in air quality. Public Health England has also completed analysis to assess whether public awareness campaigns on air quality would help aid understanding and affect behavioural change, in particular influencing transport choices such as active

travel that have multiple benefits for health, promoting increased exercise and improving air quality through reduced use of cars.

[NO2 plan](#)

In July 2017, we published the UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) Concentrations, setting out how we will achieve legal compliance with NO₂ emissions in the shortest possible time. We published a supplement to the Plan in October 2018 setting out further work with an additional 33 local authorities, bringing the total of local authorities Defra is working with to 61. The Plan is supported by a £3.5 billion investment into air quality and cleaner transport.

The Government will assess local authorities' plans to make sure they are effective, fair, good value and will deliver the required improvements in air quality in the shortest time possible. If local plans do not meet that test, the Government will reject their plans and require Councils to take action to achieve legal compliance.

Next year Birmingham and Leeds are expected to launch Charging Clean Air Zones to deter high polluting vehicles. Defra and Department for Transport (DfT) are assisting councils in the development of these zones by creating a system that allows them to identify vehicles and enable them to charge appropriately, if necessary. These Departments are continuing to work as quickly as possible to ensure that IT systems are ready for use by councils.

[Road to Zero strategy](#)

In July 2018, DfT published the Road to Zero (RtZ) strategy. The measures in the RtZ strategy add up to one of the most comprehensive support packages in the world for the transition to zero emission vehicles. The UK was one of the first major economies to announce an end to the sale of conventional new diesel and petrol cars and vans by 2040, going further than almost every other European nation.

There are 200,000 ultra low emission vehicles registered in the UK and there are more than 17,000 public chargepoints - this includes more than 1,700 rapid chargepoints, one of the largest networks in Europe.

In 2018, the UK was the second largest market for ultra low emission vehicles in the EU accounting for nearly 20% of registrations. In 2018, 1 in 5 electric cars sold in Europe were made in the UK.

[Active travel](#)

This is defined as a concept of travel that includes only those forms of transport that require active use of the human body, thus it includes cycling and walking. In 2016 DfT published the Cycling Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) which identified £1.2bn of funding projected for investment in cycling and walking from 2016-21. Since then, Local Authorities have allocated an additional £700 million to safe infrastructure and other Active Travel projects. The result is that almost £2 billion is being invested in this area over this Parliament. This represents an expected uplift of nearly 60 per cent on the investment levels projected in 2017, reflecting the growing importance of this agenda.

DfT published a Safety Review response in November 2018. Key actions include: Reviewing guidance in The Highway Code to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians; Encouraging local councils to invest around 15 per cent of their local transport infrastructure funding on cycling and walking infrastructure; Enforcement against parking in mandatory cycle lanes; Appointing a cycling and walking champion to raise the profile of Active Travel;

And engaging with key cycling and walking organisations to develop a behaviour change campaign.

Evidence

In addition, we are working to improve our evidence base. The Department of Health and Social Care's advisory Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) has started work to consider the evidence for the effect of air pollution on adverse birth outcomes. This will focus on low birth weight at term, premature birth and stillbirth. With greater understanding of the impacts of air pollution at all stages of early life, more effective and relevant action can be taken.

Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC)

Background information on health ethics covering conception and legal parenthood, surrogacy and consent and intersex surgery is at **Annex B**.

Child Health

[NHS Long Term Plan](#)

The NHS budget will increase by £33.9bn in cash terms (the equivalent of £20.5bn in real terms) by 2023/24, reflecting the fact that the NHS is this Government's top spending priority.

The plan is critical in prioritising services for children and young people. It provides a clear focus on improving the health of children and young people across mental health, learning disabilities, cancer and elsewhere. It is critical in prioritising services for children and young people in future, and it will continue to influence the wider issues that affect children's health. Creation of a Transformation Programme for Children and Young People will provide an improved strategic and coordinated response to meet the diverse needs of children and young people.

The Government wants to see all children and young people get the best start in life. We are implementing a wide range of policies to improve child health including the most ambitious childhood obesity plan in the world, transformation of children's mental health and maternity services, a world-leading immunisation programme; and tackling child sexual abuse.

[Social Determinants](#)

The Government has introduced a new [Reducing Parental Conflict Programme](#). Backed by up to £39m, the programme is encouraging councils across England to integrate services and approaches which address parental conflict into their local services for families. As part of this, a £2.7 million challenge fund has been established to support innovative projects to gather learning on what works to reduce parental conflict digitally and for families where the children face disadvantages.

We are currently working on refreshing the health offer within the Troubled Families Programme to enable it to become a standard and effective mechanism for improving the health and wellbeing of families with multiple, complex needs¹. This work includes identifying the opportunities to improve health outcomes for 0-5s, such as school readiness and oral health, and improving pathways between programmes such as this one and the Family Nurse Partnerships, so that families can receive flexible support suited to their needs.

Our [Prevention Vision](#) is clear on the importance of action in our earliest experiences, the environment around us and from the services we receive. We are focussed on tackling the root causes of poor health, not just treating the symptoms, and will continue to lead a range of policies to influence the wider issues that impact on child health.

¹ More information on the Troubled Families Programme is available in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government section of this paper

Childhood Obesity

Obese children are much more likely to become obese adults, increasing their risk of developing serious diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. This comes at a huge cost to people's health and wellbeing, to the NHS and to the wider economy.

The Department published the second chapter of our world-leading childhood obesity plan in June 2018. This builds on the real progress we have made since the publication of chapter one in 2016, particularly in the reformulation of products we all consume.

As part of delivering key measures outlined in the second chapter we have already held consultations on ending the sale of energy drinks to children, calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector, restricting promotions of fatty and sugary foods by location and by price, and further advertising restrictions including a 9pm watershed on TV and similar protection online.

The second chapter also sets a bold ambition to halve childhood obesity by 2030 and significantly reduce the gap in obesity between children from the most and least deprived areas by 2030. We want to achieve this by ensuring that we are supporting parents, particularly in the most deprived families, to help their children have the best start in life. We have reiterated this ambition in our vision document '[Prevention is better than cure](#)' published in November 2018, and in the '[NHS Long Term Plan](#)' published in January 2019.

In the second chapter, we are promoting a national ambition for every primary school to adopt an active mile initiative.

Through the second chapter we are delivering a childhood [Obesity Trailblazer Programme](#), working with local authorities to address childhood obesity at local level. The programme has a strong focus on inequalities and ethnic disparities in childhood obesity and in the next phase, that begins early this summer, it will support five local authorities with £100,000 a year in funding to take innovative action to address these issues in their community.

Nutrition and Healthy Eating

The UK Government is committed to promoting a healthy diet for children. The Healthy Food Schemes (HFS) provide a nutritional safety net to those who need it the most.

Three elements make up the current Healthy Food Scheme. These are:

- **Healthy Start (HS)** – Low-income pregnant women (at least 10 weeks pregnant) and children up to four are given vouchers for milk, fruit, and vegetables. They are also eligible for free healthy start vitamins.

Healthy Start helps to encourage a healthy diet to hundreds of thousands of pregnant women, families and children under four from low income households. It does this by providing vouchers to these families to purchase fruit, vegetables and milk. We are currently working to digitise the Healthy Start scheme, to increase the number of people claiming healthy start vouchers. This will make it easier for families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits. We are testing various changes, including an online application form to replace the current paper form and a payment card to replace paper vouchers.

Healthy Start current statistics:

- Circa 300,000 people receive Healthy Start vouchers with a value of £3.10.
- Voucher uptake is currently at 66%.

- **Nursery Milk Scheme (NMS)** – Children under five receive a 1/3 a pint of milk at nursery or school every day.

Nursery Milk current statistics:

- Approximately 244m portions (a third of a pint) of milk were reimbursed in 2018.
- Approximately 46,000 child settings are signed up.

- **School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme (SFVS)** – Children in Key Stage 1 (reception and school years 1 and 2) are given one portion of fruit or vegetables each day at school.

School Fruit and Vegetables current statistics:

- Around 2.3m Key Stage 1 pupils benefit from this scheme.
- Approximately 442m pieces of fruit and veg are distributed annually to over 16,500 institutions.

Mental Health

The NHS Long Term Plan will provide a significant backing to new and expectant partners who will be offered mental health checks and treatment under radical action to support families. Partners of expectant and new mothers who are seriously unwell will be offered a range of help such as peer-support, behavioural therapy sessions for couples and other family and parenting interventions. The Fatherhood Institute has called this 'a landmark move'.

The prevalence survey provides England's best source of data on trends in child mental health. The latest survey was funded by the Department of Health and Social Care, commissioned by NHS Digital, and carried out by the National Centre for Social Research, the Office for National Statistics and Youthmind. Comparable data is available for 5 to 15 year olds living in England in 1999, 2004, and 2017. The 2017 survey for the first time provides findings on the prevalence of mental disorder in 2 to 4 year olds, and spans the transition into adulthood by covering 17 to 19-year olds.

Support and develop therapeutic community-based services for children with mental health conditions.

In December 2018, we announced the first 25 'trailblazer' sites that will implement the proposals to provide the new schools/college-based service, staffed by a new workforce. 12 of these sites will pilot a four-week waiting time. Once implemented, the Green Paper will expand the current children and young people's mental health workforce and potentially reduce the burden on schools and NHS services.

The NHS Long Term Plan makes a renewed commitment that mental health will receive a growing share of the NHS budget, worth in real terms at least a further £2.3bn a year by 2023/24. Further, the NHS made a new commitment that funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total

mental health spending. This investment will transform and expand services for people with mental health conditions, building on the Government's current ambitious targets. By 2023/24, at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 will be able to access support via NHS funded mental health services and school or college-based Mental Health Support Teams. Over the coming decade the goal is to ensure that 100% of children and young people who need specialist care can access it.

Community-based mental health services for children and young people are now expanding and the NHS Long Term Plan made a commitment that, over the next five years, the NHS will continue to invest in expanding access to community-based mental health services to meet the needs of more children and young people.

Disabilities

Extension of autism strategy to children

We know that autistic children often have a range of needs and require support from education, health and social care. We want to strengthen this join up to ensure that autistic children get the right support they need and at the right time. For example, early intervention to stop needs from escalating to prevent autistic children going into crisis and being admitted into inpatient facilities when they can be cared for closer to home.

We are currently reviewing our autism strategy and, working with the Department for Education, we will be extending the scope of the strategy to include children. By making our strategy all ages, we have another opportunity to describe how an improved pathway from early years would lessen the need for residential or inpatient services and deliver better outcomes for autistic children. The refreshed strategy will be published by the end of 2019.

Sports prosthetics

In the March 2016 budget, former Chancellor George Osborne announced that the Government was investing £1.5 million in child prostheses over two years, giving hundreds of children with limb deficiency access to sports prostheses and creating a fund to incentivise the development of innovative prosthetics products for the NHS. An estimated 220 children benefited from the fund in financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18.

In April 2018, the Government announced that in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 a further £1.5 million would be made available for child sports prostheses. Of the £1.5 million, £500,000 is ring fenced and available in each financial year for the provision of child sports prostheses and £500,000 will be available for research across the two financial years.

Changing Places

In December 2018, The Minister of State for Care announced £2m funding for NHS Trusts in England to install Changing Places facilities in hospitals and significantly improve provision. From the 31st May 2019, NHS Trusts have been able to bid for this funding, on a matched basis.

Changing Places toilets give severely disabled people and their families the opportunity to visit public places that they otherwise would not be able to and can therefore make a huge difference to their quality of life. It is estimated that at least 250,000 people in the UK need Changing Places toilets in order to have their toileting needs met in a safe, dignified and humane way.

Wheelchairs

On 21st February 2019, the Department of Health and Social Care announced their intention to extend legal rights to personal health budgets to those people who are eligible for NHS wheelchair services including children and young people

The personal wheelchair budget model enables the provision of wheelchairs to be based on the health and wellbeing outcomes that people, including children and young people, want to achieve, which promotes integration and greater choice of wheelchairs. They also enable the pooling of funding from a variety of sources including health and social care and charitable funding, enabling the purchase of one wheelchair to meet a range of needs.

With a personal wheelchair budget, wheelchair users should expect to have:

- a personalised assessment where they are supported to identify the health and wellbeing outcomes they wish to achieve
- a personalised care and support plan which captures the health and wellbeing outcomes identified, which may be part of any wider care plans the person requires for their care, for example an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan
- care that is better integrated, meaning that different agencies work together to support their postural and mobility needs and achieve their health and wellbeing outcomes
- information provided upfront about the amount of money available in their personal wheelchair budget and the options available to them use it locally
- information about the repair and maintenance of wheelchairs, if the option to purchase a wheelchair outside of the NHS commissioned service is taken.

For children and young people this is underpinned by the expectations of SEND code of practice (Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years)

Child mortality

The Maternity Transformation Programme is working to roll out personal care plans for all women by 2021, seeking to achieve the vision of the [Better Births 2016 Five Year Forward](#) view for maternity care, with improving outcomes of maternity services in England.

Through the Long-Term Plan 2019, the NHS will accelerate action to achieve 50% reductions in stillbirth, maternal mortality, neonatal mortality and serious brain injury by 2025.

The NHS Patient Safety Strategy 2019 will deliver the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Improvement Programme to support the work of the Long-Term Plan and facilitating safety improvement in NHS maternity services through the maternity investigations programme.

The Healthcare Safety Investigations Branch (HSIB) will continue to conduct independent investigations of patient safety concerns in NHS-funded care across England, every one of the cases investigated will be feedback to relevant organisations for harm reduction.

Every maternity service in the NHS is actively implementing elements of the Saving Babies' Lives Care Bundle 2019, which comprises four key elements of care: reducing smoking in pregnancy; risk assessment and surveillance for foetal growth restriction; raising awareness of reduced foetal movement; and effective foetal monitoring during labour. The second version of the care bundle (March 2019) builds on the success of the first, and we are committed to implement fully it by March 2020. We will encourage development of specialist pre-term birth clinics across England. By 2024, 75% of women from Black and Minority

Ethnic communities and a similar percentage of women from the most socially deprived groups will receive continuity of care to help reduce pre-term births, hospital admissions, and the need for intervention during labour, and women's experience of care.

The [Each Baby Counts](#) (EBC) Learn and Support 2018 follows the EBC programme a three-year partnership between the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) to work with a number of local maternity units to support multi-professional learning and clinical leadership.

Every trust in England with a maternity and neonatal service is now part of the National Maternal and Neonatal Health Safety Collaborative, which is supporting practical improvements to make care safer in all maternity units by the end of 2019/20. Through this, we are supporting a culture of multidisciplinary team working and learning, vital for safe, high-quality maternity care. We will introduce more Neonatal Intensive Care Cots and develop our expert neonatal nursing workforce, as well as redesigning and expanding neonatal critical care services to improve the safety and effectiveness of services and experience of families.

[The National Child Mortality Database](#)

Article 6 of the UNCRC states that every child has the right to life and that Governments should do all they can to ensure children survive and develop to their full potential. In order to achieve this, we must understand how and why children die.

In 2008, the child death review process became a statutory requirement in England, with Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs) or an equivalent, collecting localised data on child deaths.

On 1 April 2019, the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) was launched, collating information from CDOPs or an equivalent on all children in England who die before their 18th birthday regardless of the cause of death. New statutory guidance published by the Department of Health and Social Care in 2018 ensured CDOPs or an equivalent, collect a standardised dataset for all children across England. This approach to data collection means the NCMD will identify the underlying determinants of child mortality. The data collected achieves parity of esteem for children and places an emphasis on the identification of modifiable factors across the whole lifetime of the child, from conception to death.

The NCMD will improve knowledge, information sharing and learning across England. It is a major tool to combat child mortality and is the first database in the world bringing national review data together for every child who dies from birth up to their 18th birthday, driving improvement in the quality of health and social care for children in England.

NCMD will contribute to the achievement of Article 24 of the UNCRC by identifying improvements in the provision of services for children across health, social care and education, informing policymaking and commissioning of services at a national, regional and local level. The learning identified will inform public health awareness campaigns and support families raising their children.

The commissioning of NCMD represents the UK Government's commitment to learning from every child death and the recognition that every child's life is important, no matter how short. It will improve the lives of children and young people in England, helping us hear the voices of children who have died, remembering them and protecting future children.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

DWP is engaged in a variety of work focused on providing support to children and young people within the following areas.

Youth employment

Youth Obligation Support Programme

- The Government is committed to providing targeted support for young people so that everyone, no matter what their start in life, is given the very best chance of getting into work. This is critical if we are to improve productivity and reduce intergenerational disadvantage and poverty.
- The Youth Obligation Support Programme was introduced in April 2017 for 18-21 year olds making a new claim to Universal Credit. This was introduced to Jobcentres in line with the roll out schedule for UC Full Service, and was delivered on target in December 2018. YOSP is now available in every Jobcentre.
- The programme starts with an intensive activity period of workshops and interventions that encourages young people to think more broadly about their skills and job goals. It helps them identify any training they need, understand what the labour market in their areas can offer and supports them to improve their job search, job application and interview skills.
- Young people receive work-focused coaching and referral to additional support drawn from a wide menu of locally available provision. This is tailored to address specific needs and can include employability skills, basic skills training, work-related skills training, work experience opportunities and additional appropriate support funded by local authorities, charities and other providers.
- We anticipate that many young people receiving this valuable intensive support will move into further education, vocational training, an apprenticeship or job.
- At 6 months, if the young person remains unemployed, they will be offered a sector based work academy placement or encouraged to take up a traineeship, both of which combine vocational training with work experience. For every 18-21 year old on the programme who does not take up work-related training, we are offering a 3 month work experience placement to help them achieve their job goals.
- Those that do not take up this offer of work experience will continue to receive work-focused support from their work coach and may be referred to a range of local provision to support them into work.

JobCentre Plus Support for Schools

- The Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme targets young people ages 12-18 who are at particular risk of being out of education, employment or training (NEET) or who face disadvantages when looking for work.
- Support for Schools is now embedded as a 'business as usual' JCP service.
- The initiative is demand-led by schools, responsive and flexible.

- DWP is working in close partnership with the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), the National Careers Service and the National Apprenticeship Service to ensure alignment with other organizations working in the careers sector.

Mentoring Circles

- In January 2019, the Minister for Employment announced the national roll out of the mentoring circles initiative and the extension from ethnic minority individuals to all young people who would benefit from such support. Mentoring circles were introduced in London in March and rolled out nationally in April 2019.

Maternity Benefits

- Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance (MA) provide a measure of earnings replacement to help a woman who has worked close to or during her pregnancy to stop work towards the end of it and in the months after childbirth, in the interests of her own and her baby's health and wellbeing.
- The standard weekly rate of SMP and MA is £148.68 from April (2019/20). This is considerably higher than the level of other out of work benefits and reflects the special position of pregnant working women and new mothers. The rate of SMP and MA is reviewed annually. Generally, they are increased in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). The UK Government expends nearly £3 billion a year on maternity payments.

Child Maintenance

- Children gain from better health, emotional wellbeing and life outcomes when their parents, whether together or separated, have a productive and collaborative relationship. To help facilitate this important social goal, the UK Government is delivering significant reforms to the child maintenance system.
- The reforms are intended to incentivise separated parents to work in partnership for the benefit of their children, and to provide an effective child maintenance service to ensure money is transferred between parents to support the cost of raising children.
- The child maintenance reforms also recognise that a collaborative arrangement is either not possible and/or not suitable for everyone, so the UK child maintenance system provides a statutory scheme for those parents who really need it.
- Through the provision of more support for separated families to work together and reach collaborative arrangements, and an efficient statutory child maintenance service with effective enforcement for those that need it, the UK Government is determined to help maximise the number of effective maintenance arrangements for children who live apart from one or both of their parents. An arrangement is regarded as effective where some of the agreed amount is regularly received either in cash or in kind and the receiving parent considers the arrangement is working.

Universal Credit

Childcare

- The Government recognises that childcare costs can affect parents' decisions to take up paid work or increase their working hours. We are committed to helping parents into work.
- To overcome this barrier to employment, Universal Credit claimants are able to claim up to 85 per cent of their childcare costs, compared to 70% on the legacy system. This can be claimed up to a month before starting a job, and can be worth up to £13,000 a year for families with two children.
- We recognise the difficulty that some claimants might have in paying upfront childcare costs. Where the initial month's childcare costs may prevent a claimant from starting work, Jobcentres will use the Flexible Support Fund to help claimants in the first instance. This is a non-repayable award, which can be used to meet the upfront childcare costs to help support a claimant into work. For claimants who are in work and need help with upfront childcare costs, budgeting advances are available that can be used to cover the cost of paying upfront childcare costs or a deposit.
- Following a successful pilot, we have nationally implemented a more flexible approach for claimants reporting childcare costs, which will allow claimants, including lone parents, to be reimbursed for childcare when, with good reason, they are not able to provide evidence within their assessment period.
- We have undertaken significant work to increase work coach awareness and understanding of the Universal Credit childcare offer through improved training and guidance and communications.
- The Universal Credit childcare policy also aligns with the wider Government childcare offer, which includes free childcare hours and tax-free childcare.

Benefits to help meet the additional cost of being disabled

- Depending on their age, children may be entitled to either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) paid up to age 15 or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) paid from age 16.
- Both DLA and PIP provide a financial contribution towards the additional costs that people with a long-term health condition or disability may face. Entitlement to the benefits is based on personal care/daily-living needs or mobility needs (broadly speaking, they are not condition based).
- They are paid in addition to any other benefit or service received and can be paid at between £23.20 and £148.85 a week, tax free, and the rates continue to increase in line with inflation.
- Spending on DLA and PIP are part of the over £55 billion the GB Government provides on benefits to support disabled people.
- There are currently around 475,000 children aged 15 or under in receipt of DLA and expenditure for this group is expected to be around £2.25 billion in this financial year. There are nearly 204,000 children and young people aged 16 to 24 currently in receipt of PIP.

- Entitlement to DLA or PIP can be a “passport” through to additional entitlements such as disability premiums or additional amounts paid within the income-related benefits, Carer’s Allowance for someone caring for the disabled child or access to the Motability Scheme, which can provide vehicles and powered wheelchairs.
- Households with an eligible disabled child in them (in receipt of DLA or PIP) are exempt from the Benefit Cap.

Troubled Families Programme (led by MHCLG, with DWP support)

- DWP provides a network of around 300 Jobcentre Plus work coaches, in support of the MHCLG-led Troubled Families Programme*. Known nationally as Troubled Families Employment Advisers (TFEAs). They are often co-located to sit within local authorities (LAs) and support families identified as being out of work, at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness.

**more detailed information is available in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government section of this paper.*

- A TFEA’s role usually involves:
 - Providing bespoke, tailored support to individuals within families. Helping them on the path towards finding appropriate training or employment.
 - Boosting employment expertise by up-skilling their LA counterparts and other local partnerships. Also raising awareness of the Troubled Families programme within Jobcentres.
 - Updating Jobcentre Plus data systems. To acknowledge a claimant is receiving TFEA support and checking on their progress.
- Data is also exchanged between DWP and LAs, to confirm someone’s eligibility for the Programme. DWP matches data with addresses identified by LAs against working age benefit records via an Automated Data Matching Solution (ADMS).
- Recent evaluation of the Programme (published 19 March) is positive about the TFEA role. They add value through working intensively with the most challenging and isolated families who might not benefit from standard JCP services. They have helped to drive multi-agency working and 11% fewer adults are claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance 19-24 months after joining the Programme.

Reducing Parental Conflict

- Parents play a critical role in giving children the experiences and skills they need to succeed. However, children who are exposed to parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and poorly resolved can suffer long-term harm. It can affect their early emotional and social development, their educational attainment and later employability - limiting their chances to lead fulfilling, happy lives.
- This is why we introduced a **Reducing Parental Conflict programme**. Backed by up to £39m, the programme is encouraging councils across England to integrate services and approaches which address parental conflict into their local provision for families.

- Since 2015, the Department for Work and Pensions has been working with a small group of local authorities to test ways of addressing parental conflict, as part of our **Local Family Offer**.
- The lessons learned from our work with these areas helped us to develop the Reducing Parental Conflict programme, which we announced in April 2017 as part of *Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families*.
- The Reducing Parental Conflict programme builds on what we learned from delivering the Local Family Offer, and focuses on building the evidence base further; showing what works when supporting mums and dads experiencing conflict; and increasing the availability of support in local areas.
- The programme has two key components:
 1. Direct interventions –ensuring evidence-based interventions are more widely available to improve children’s outcomes
 - Reducing Parental Conflict face-to-face services designed for workless/disadvantaged families in four Contract Package Areas
 - A Reducing Parental Conflict Challenge Fund: providing grant funding to 10 innovative projects to gather learning on what works to reduce parental conflict digitally and for families where the children face other disadvantages.
 - Jointly funded DHSC/DWP Innovation Fund and Section 64 grants for Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents
 2. Up-skilling Local Authorities/Partners delivering services for children – to tackle and embed parental conflict support within mainstream services
 - Funding training for Local Authorities
 - Working with the Troubled Families Programme
 - Funding the Early Intervention Foundation to deliver a work programme of evidence gathering and dissemination to local strategic partners

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

The Rights of the Child (ROC) portfolio sits with three key directorates at the FCO: Consular Directorate; Overseas Territories Directorate; and Multilateral Policy Directorate.

Child Protection Unit, Consular Directorate

Article 3 of the UN Convention of the Rights of a Child 1991 creates an obligation to keep the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. UK courts have applied this to Her Majesty's Government bodies and it is reflected in the principles of the Children Act 1989. Although the FCO has no duty of care to British Nationals overseas, FCO Consular Directorate has extensive guidance on child assistance policy in which the best interests of the child are the primary consideration. All new FCO Consular Officers must complete mandatory safeguarding e-learning and attend a mandatory week long course, which covers child safeguarding and assistance policy. To further support Consular Officers overseas, FCO Consular Directorate has a network of around 40 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO) across the world who support front-line consular staff working on child cases. All DSOs attend a CPD accredited course to acquire the knowledge and skills required to provide advice on child safeguarding and each time a child case is opened on our case database, CASEBOOK, an automatic prompt instructs Consular Officers to consult with their local DSO. In addition, there is a dedicated Child Protection Unit in Consular Directorate in London tasked with providing advice on particularly complex child cases, the FCO employs a Specialist Social Work Advisor on Child Protection to ensure our policy, and case advice is in line with best practice and the best interests of the child.

Overseas Territories Directorate (OTD)

Each Overseas Territory has its own Constitution, Government, and local laws. The UK Government expects the territories to abide by the same basic standards of human rights as the UK. We encourage them to agree to the extension of UN human rights conventions ratified by the UK, but to do so only when they are ready to apply them.

The UK Government continues to work with the Governments of the Overseas Territories to help them deliver their commitment to ensure the highest possible standards for the protection of children and promotion of children's welfare. We have developed tailored programmes of support with a number of territories. These aim to build the capability of key staff (particularly police, social workers and educators); recognise child abuse and tackle it effectively; enhance legal frameworks; and develop more robust systems to enable agencies to work together effectively on child safeguarding.

Child Safeguarding Unit in OTD

Since 2015, the Child Safeguarding Unit (CSU) in the FCO's OTD has been working with territory Governments and Governors to ensure the highest possible standards for the protection of children and promotion of children's welfare, and a zero tolerance approach to abuse. The CSI-J promotes the importance of the voice of the child in decision making that affects them on an individual or policy basis.

Working with territories, and through the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), the FCO has developed bespoke programmes of support which aim to: build the capability (particularly of police, social workers, and educators) to recognise and respond effectively to child abuse; enhance legal frameworks; and strengthen multiagency working. We engage key sources of expertise to provide that support, including: the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command, and Barnardo's.

In 2019, the UK Government will support the territories as they develop, finalise, and begin to implement their National Response Plans on child safeguarding. We are highlighting the UNCRC 30th Anniversary to all Overseas Territories and encouraging activity, which promotes and celebrates children's rights and demonstrates progress. We have reminded all territories of the concluding observations of the UNCRC and continue to encourage review in light of the observations. We have already witnessed progress in this respect, for example, the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) introduced the Status of Children Ordinance in 2019. We continue to encourage and support requests for the extension of UN human rights conventions and the removal of the reservations to those conventions.

Conflict Stability & Security Fund (CSSF)

Through CSSF funding, the FCO has supported work in Overseas Territories including Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), Montserrat, and St Helena.

In the Cayman Islands, support has helped strengthen the initial multi-agency response to child safeguarding referrals and facilitated the development of a child helpline service and a Child Safeguarding Board, which will play a key role in driving Cayman's strategy on child safeguarding.

In TCI, CSSF funding contributed to the establishment of The Ethel Ingham Centre, which is designed to provide a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children and victims of sexual assault. The FCO has enabled key safeguarding professionals from Bermuda, Cayman, and Montserrat to share experiences and knowledge with professionals in the UK with a view to identifying and sharing good practice, and strengthening procedures. We have provided technical advice to support the Government of St Helena to strengthen its child protection and safeguarding services. We have also supported the police in Anguilla, Bermuda, Cayman, Montserrat, and TCI in strengthening their investigative and case management capabilities.

While the CSI-J is not engaging with migrant children directly, the support that we provide to territories is to help them build political commitment and strengthen capability to safeguard all children within a territory. We are working with UNICEF Eastern Caribbean on plans for positive behaviour management training to be delivered to teachers and a number of parents in Anguilla, Montserrat, TCI and the British Virgin Islands. We are exploring the creation of a resource that Overseas Territories can bid into, to fund activity which enables children's views to influence child safeguarding policy and operational decision-making; which promotes the rights of the child detailed in the UNCRC; and which increases children's awareness of their rights under the UNCRC.

Multilateral Policy Directorate (MPD)

MPD is responsible for the coordination of cross-Government policy instructions for the Rights of the Child (ROC) resolutions, and thematic debates within multilateral fora such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Human Rights Council (HRC). We

ensure the UK's policy position, across a breadth of different issues under the ROC portfolio, is both reflected and protected at all stages of the negotiation phase.

Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)

The FCO is responsible for the UK's policy on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC). The UK's objectives for CAAC are primarily pursued through our engagement with the UN. We remain the largest single financial contributor to the office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for CAAC, providing £800,000 in the last five years and an additional £500,000 for this financial year. We are an active member of the UN CAAC Working Group, leading the international response on child soldiers and child protection. This includes pressing parties listed in the UN Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC to agree concrete action plans with the UN.

A number of key milestones on the CAAC agenda were achieved in 2018/19. The UK endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) and the Vancouver Principles political commitments to reduce the impact of conflict on education and to ensure that child protection is an operational priority for UN peacekeeping missions, respectively. International partners, NGOs and civil society organisations have reacted positively to our endorsements and are keen to work with the UK to ensure effective implementation.

In January 2019, a cross-Government CAAC Working Group was created to secure greater cross-Government coordination across the wider CAAC agenda and to oversee UK implementation of the key instruments to which the UK is signatory. This includes the SSD, the Vancouver Principles, the Paris Principles and Commitments, and the Optional protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. The group comprises officials from the FCO, the Department for International Development, and the Ministry of Defence, reflecting the necessary diplomatic, humanitarian, and military effort required to improve the protection of children caught up in conflict and instability. We recognise the importance of amplifying children's voices and the powerful impact this can have in raising the profile of the CAAC Agenda, and are using this working group as a platform to engage more with civil society and youth campaigners on key issues.

In May 2019, the Minister responsible for the CAAC portfolio at the FCO, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, spoke at the third Safe Schools International Conference hosted by Spain, demonstrating UK leadership on the Declaration and encouraging continued coordination and collaboration with a range of stakeholders.

Government Equality Office (GEO)

Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools

GEO established a £3 million programme from 2016 to 2019 to prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools in a sustainable way. This programme focuses on primary and secondary schools in England, which currently have few or ineffective measures in place. The programme has reached 1800 schools and we have committed to build on the programme, extending funding for further interventions in schools until 2020.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transphobic Action Plan

GEO published the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transphobic Action Plan in July 2018, in which we committed to ensuring that schools have access to the guidance they need to support LGBT pupils. This includes the Department for Education publishing an update to its guidance for schools about how apply the Equality Act 2010 and GEO is working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to publish comprehensive schools guidance on how to support trans pupils. The updated Relationship, Sex and Health Education guidance for schools supports teaching that is age appropriate and relevant to all pupils, whatever their developing sexual orientation and gender identity.

Period poverty

On the 4th of March, the Minister for Women and Equalities announced a new Taskforce to bring together Government, business and the third sector to develop a comprehensive and sustainable response to period poverty in the UK.

The Taskforce is chaired by Plan International, Procter & Gamble and the Minister for Women and Equalities. Alongside Plan International and Procter & Gamble, the Taskforce includes members from grass-root organisations, businesses, public bodies and will consult with academics, social enterprises, retailers and manufacturers, using their expertise to drive this vital work.

The Taskforce will tackle data gaps, improving evidence and understanding on period issues in the UK; tackle the stigma, shame and taboo around menstruation through better awareness and education; and, improve access to period products for all women and girls including vulnerable groups. Up to £250,000 of seed funding from GEO has been earmarked to support the work of the new Taskforce in generating and testing new ideas and schemes.

This work complements the DFE's new scheme to provide access to free period products in schools and 16-19 education institutions in England.

Abortion in Northern Ireland

The issue of abortion in Northern Ireland is a sensitive issue with strongly held views on both sides of the debate. The Abortion Act 1967 has never been extended to Northern Ireland and abortion remains a criminal offence except in limited circumstances. However, on Tuesday 9th July, as an amendment to the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Bill, the House of Commons voted for the Government to give effect to the recommendations of

CEDAW concerning abortion in Northern Ireland. This would have the effect of liberalising the current abortion framework in Northern Ireland. The Government is now considering how best to take this forward, recognising the clear message made by the House.

However, in the meantime, a travel scheme funded by GEO since 2017 supports women and girls from Northern Ireland to access abortion services free of charge in England, with similar schemes established in Scotland and Wales.

Gender equality at every stage: A roadmap for change

Earlier this month, the Minister for Women and Equalities published *Gender equality at every stage: A roadmap for change*. It sets out the Government's plans to address the persistent gendered barriers people face at every stage of life. The roadmap announces a range of cross-Government activity to address gender inequality, including tackling the limiting attitudes and social norms about roles for men and women. In terms of initiatives, particularly relevant to children, the roadmap highlights plans to invest in programmes to increase participation in STEM including DFE-led initiatives, publish research and tools to tackle poor body image and publish research and practical advice on how to engage men and boys.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provides protection against direct and indirect discrimination for all children under 18 years, in most of the areas covered under the Act, except those unique to adults, such as the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership, and the specific exceptions in the age provisions, which allow under 18s to be treated differently.

Differential treatment between people of different ages is permitted where this can be objectively justified. Where differential treatment is used, an organisation will be required to demonstrate in the event of challenge, that the different treatment is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. This means that there must always be a sufficient and justifiable reason for the different treatment. Some reasons for the different treatment for under 18s are to provide some additional or different rights of protection, for example, providing concessionary services, targeting specific activities at under 18s, protecting their welfare or ensuring their health and safety.

Disability provisions in the Equality Act 2010

We believe that the UK has some of the strongest disability and equality rights in the world. The UK is committed to continue protecting the rights of disabled people, including disabled children, by ensuring that Government policies incorporate the human rights-based approach to disability in order to break down barriers and meet the needs of disabled people.

The disability provisions in the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) are broad enough to ensure that any disabled person or disabled child has the same protections to live their lives free from discrimination and harassment in their private lives, their communities, education, employment and access to the provision of services.

The UK's support for the human rights-based model is demonstrated through the many policies and initiatives undertaken by Government to improve life choices and opportunities for disabled people in all the areas covered by the Act.

HM Treasury (HMT)

Impact of social security and tax credit on children

HM Treasury conducts comprehensive assessments of the cumulative impact of available social security and tax credit on children.

Distributional analysis is conducted to determine how spending decisions affect households, and thereby living standards, across the income distribution. This is a central consideration when allocating public funds. HM Treasury's most recent distributional analysis, published alongside Budget 2018, shows the cumulative effect on household incomes of policies on welfare, tax, and public service spending measures taken by the UK Government.

HM Treasury works with the Department for Work and Pensions and other departments on policies that impact on low-income families. Since autumn Budget 2016, the following measures have been announced in fiscal events. All policies are made with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the impact on people with protected characteristics, including age, disability, and ethnicity.

This includes the following changes to Universal Credit²:

Change	Event
Reducing the Universal Credit taper from 65% to 63%	Autumn Statement 2016
Introducing targeted exceptions to the two-child limit	Spring Budget 2017
Removing the seven-day waiting period for Universal Credit, so that entitlement starts on the first day of the application	Autumn Budget 2017
Introducing the Housing Benefit run-on, so that those on housing benefit will continue to receive their award for the first two weeks of their Universal Credit claim.	
Introducing an interest-free advance of up to a month's worth of Universal Credit within five days of the claim. Extending the recovery period for these advances from six months to twelve months.	
Reducing the maximum rate that debt can be deducted from 40% to 30% and extended advances repayment period from 12 to 16 months.	Budget 2018
Increasing work allowances for households with children and people with disabilities by £1000.	
Introducing Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support run-on	

² Universal Credit is a payment to help people with living costs. It is paid monthly - or twice a month for some people in Scotland.

Extending access to the 12 month grace period from the Minimum Income Floor to all those gainfully self-employed	
Reinstating automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit for 18-21s	

In addition, in January 2019 DWP Secretary of State announced that the Government was also stopping the extension of the two-child policy to include children born before 6 April 2017. The Government has also introduced measures to help those in work on low incomes. This includes increasing the National Living Wage, which has risen to £8.21 an hour and increased the personal allowance to £12,500.

Taking a child-rights approach to government budgeting

The UK Government regularly undertakes Spending Reviews, which set departmental budgets across a one to four year period. This includes setting the budget for the Department for Education, which includes key areas of funding for children, including childcare, schools and Further Education. As part of agreeing these budgets, the then Chancellor announced at Spring Statement 2019 that at the next Spending Review we will have a renewed focus on delivering high quality outcomes. With respect to particular bids, we pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the potential impact of policy decisions on people with protected characteristics, including age.

HM Treasury regularly receives financial information on spending by departments, including the Department for Education, on budgets agreed as part of the Spending Review; and further engages with departments on the evaluation of the implementation of policies to ensure they meet policy intent.

Home Office (HO)

Drugs and Alcohol

The Home Office is responsible for the oversight and governance of the cross-Government 2017 Drug Strategy. Our prevention approach combines universal action for all young people with targeted action for groups at particular risk. Our ambition is for fewer young people to use drugs in the first place, but for those that do we want to help them to stop and to live a life free from dependence. This includes placing a greater emphasis on building resilience and confidence among our young people to prevent them being vulnerable to the range of risks they may face (e.g. drug and alcohol misuse, crime, exploitation, unhealthy relationships).

Whilst there is a range of activity undertaken across Government, the Home Office has a particular focus on supporting evidence-based programmes, which have a positive impact on young people, giving them the confidence and resilience to resist drug misuse. For instance, the Home Office and Public Health England (PHE) continue to invest in the Alcohol and Drugs Education and Prevention Information Service, which provides practical advice and tools to schools and educators.

Furthermore, the Home Office provided more than £90,000 of funding in 2018/19 to support the delivery of Mentor UK's Real-Life Skills project. This delivered a pilot prevention programme with the aim to steer young people away from becoming involved in drug use, drug-related crime and risky behaviour.

The Home Office and PHE are working closely together to better understand the extent of the collaboration between Children and Young People's services and the substance misuse treatment system. PHE and HO jointly hosted a roundtable event on 4 July 2019 with Service Providers and Commissioners to explore the current level of collaboration, integration of services and innovation, as well as the challenges in relation to investment in services and in the workforce. This work is being taken forward by PHE to consider next steps and future improvements.

On 8 February 2019, we announced the appointment of Professor Dame Carol Black to lead a major review looking into the ways in which drugs are fuelling serious violence. The Review is being held in two parts, with part one focusing on the demographics of drug use and the drugs market. We anticipate targeted communication and prevention activity to reduce demand for drugs among key segments of society, including young people. Detailed proposals will be developed once Professor Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs has reported her findings from part one of the review and following further strategic communications research into most effective approaches to influencing our target groups.

On 15 May, the Home Secretary appointed Dr Ed Day as the Recovery Champion who will play a pivotal role in assessing the current treatment system and sharing insight as to how the Government can work with external stakeholders and partners to give people the best chance of recovering from substance misuse. Dr Day's insight, strengthened by his extensive clinical experience in the field of substance misuse, will inform our approach to young people, in addition to other groups who are at risk or are already misusing drugs.

Serious Violence including county lines

The Home Office leads the Government's response to serious violence, including the violence and exploitation associated with county lines drug dealing. The Government's [Serious Violence Strategy](#), published in April 2018, stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes of violence, and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence. Our approach is not based solely on law enforcement but depends on a multi-agency, public health approach across a number of sectors.

We have been taking forward a significant programme of work through the Serious Violence Strategy, including investing over [£220 million](#) in early intervention and announcing additional money to support police forces to tackle serious violence through additional surge activity and creation of multi-agency Violence Reduction Units.

Our [Early Intervention Youth Fund](#) of £22 million is supporting 40 projects across England and Wales supporting work with children and young people at risk of criminal exploitation and county lines, or who are at risk/ have already offended to help divert them into positive life choices. At least 60,000 children and young people will be reached by the end of March 2020. The £200 million [Youth Endowment Fund](#) will deliver a ten-year programme of grants that will enable interventions targeted at children and young people most at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, whether as victim or perpetrator. Our #knifefree media advertising, developed with the input of young people to challenge the perception amongst young people that carrying a knife is normal, is estimated to have reached around 6 million young people in each of its two phases in 2018.

The Strategy also includes a range of actions to enhance our response to the issue of county lines drug dealing. This includes the provision of £3.6 million to establish the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to enhance the intelligence picture and support cross-region efforts to tackle county lines. Since its launch in September 2018, the Centre has carried out three separate weeks of intensive operational activity leading to over 1600 arrests and 2100 young people and vulnerable adults safeguarded. We have also undertaken national awareness-raising communication activity for frontline professionals on how to identify potential victims of county lines and appropriate referral routes for safeguarding, as well as developing communications targeted to young people. Since 2017, we have also provided funding for specialist support services for victims of county lines-related exploitation and their families.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The Government is committed to tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) in all its forms and to protecting children from this terrible crime. During a speech at the NSPCC headquarters in September 2018 and at an NSPCC Conference in June 2019, the Home Secretary demonstrated his personal commitment to tackling these crimes.

We want victims to have the confidence to report crimes of child sexual exploitation and abuse, knowing they will get the support they need and that everything will be done to bring offenders to justice.

Strategy

As a Government, our ambitious programme of reform is already driving work to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse (CSA), including by tackling online harms, introducing relationship and sex education and improving safeguarding practice. However, we need to do more.

The nature and scale of CSA is changing, and our understanding of online offending shines a light on abuse perpetrated in the home and in the community that we might not have detected before. This is why we must act now to galvanise efforts at the local, national and international level to prevent and tackle all forms of CSA.

Therefore, the Home Secretary has recently announced that the Home Office will be publishing a cross-Government strategy at the end of the year, which will outline our long-term ambition in tackling child sexual abuse, and how we will work across Government and sectors to tackle the threat.

The Strategy will complement the Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy, published in November 2018, focusing in on CSA issues to develop further our understanding of the changing nature and scale of CSA, as well as ensuring we develop a whole-system response.

Online pursue

Through improved intelligence, we know that the abuse of children online is becoming easier and more extreme. The National Crime Agency (NCA) estimates that 80,000 individuals in the UK present a sexual threat to children and the figure could be significantly higher.

We have stepped up our response and seen real successes. Each month coordinated pursue activity by the NCA and policing against online CSEA is resulting in the arrest of around 400 offenders, and the safeguarding of around 500 children.

We have invested in innovative technology such as the Child Abuse Image Database (CAID) to tackle the problem at scale. All UK police forces and NCA are connected to, and use, CAID and has made the UK a world leader in victim identification. With further investment, CAID is introducing facial matching, fast forensic triaging of seized devices and the use of artificial intelligence automatically to categorise the severity of child abuse images without human intervention.

There has been an increase in investment and capability of the intelligence community to target the most dangerous and determined online CSEA offenders. The NCA-GCHQ Joint Operations Team (JOT) works to identify the most dangerous and determined child sexual exploitation offenders; we have also invested in the NCA to help provide them with a better picture of child sexual exploitation offending on the dark web. This will use available data to identify, assess and pursue the highest risk suspects of interest who are affecting the UK, so we can prioritise our resources against them, in collaboration with international partners.

Our overarching aim is that we leave no safe spaces for offenders to operate online. At the heart of this approach, as set out in the revised SOC Strategy, will be greater focus on the most dangerous offenders and high harm networks; new capabilities to build our understanding of offending behaviours and counter demand; and engagement with the tech companies to stop offenders' access to children and CSEA content.

In the Home Secretary's speech at the NSPCC on 3 September 2018, he announced that we will be investing an extra £21 million over the next 18 months to improve how our law enforcement agencies reduce the volume of offending and pursue the most dangerous and prolific offenders. This includes further funding of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) to target online grooming of children through increased undercover online capability.

Technology Industry

The integration of technology companies in response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse is integral to achieving progress on the Home Secretary's five asks of industry, as announced on the 3rd September 2018:

- Block child sexual abuse material as soon as companies detect it being uploaded.
- Stop child grooming taking place on their platforms.
- Work with us to shut down live-streamed child abuse.
- Be more forward learning in helping law enforcement agencies deal with these types of crimes.
- Display a greater deal of openness and transparency, and a willingness to share best practice and technology between companies.

This approach aligns to the SOC strategy and we have committed to where the Home Secretary's ask are set out and actively stepping up engagement with technology companies.

We expect industry to play its part in combatting the global threat, including: Increased focus of industry partners on combatting less developed threat areas of grooming and livestreaming, and on preventative measures such as age verification.

Increased collaboration between industry partners to share innovation and best practice including across sectors.

[The Home Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Online Harms White Paper](#),* published in April 2019, will introduce a duty of care and outline a spectrum of expectations of companies. The Online Harms White Paper sets out some of the areas we expect the regulator to include in a code of practice for companies to fulfil the duty of care. At the same time, we are pursuing initiatives with companies around voluntary action.

**There is more detailed information on this in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport section of this paper.*

International Engagement

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse is a global crime that demands a global response. To tackle effectively online child sexual exploitation and abuse, we therefore need to focus our attention overseas. We are stepping up both our multilateral and bilateral international engagement on this issue, as well as our capacity and capability building work.

Five Country Ministerial

Online CSEA will be a priority theme at this year's [Five Country Ministerial \(FCM\)](#), to be hosted by the UK in July. Collaboration will focus in particular on technology and digital industry, building on the 2018 Joint Statement on Countering the Illicit Use of Online Spaces. Deliverables agreed at the FCM will be driven forward in 2019-20 through the Digital Industry Engagement Senior Officials Group.

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund

The UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) provides development and security support to countries, which are at risk of conflict or instability. Programmes focus on different regions and themes, covering over 70 countries and delivering security, stability, peace-building and peacekeeping activities.

For the 2019-2020 funding period, the UK Home Office has bid for CSSF funding for projects to [tackle the threat of child sexual exploitation and abuse](#) and has invited tenders from international delivery partners.

[WePROTECT Global Alliance](#)

The WePROTECT Global Alliance (WPGA) is a global movement that brings together the influence, expertise and resources required to transform how online child sexual exploitation is dealt with worldwide. Its multi-stakeholder nature is unique in this field, with 89 countries, 22 global technology companies, 25 leading Non-Governmental Organisations and eight regional organisations signed up to the initiative.

The WPGA is driven and funded by the UK Home Office and forms a key element of our international response to this crime. The Home Office has been the sole financial donor to the WPGA since its inception and provides the entire running costs of the Secretariat, estimated to be £1-2 million per year.

The WPGA will be holding a global summit, hosted by the African Union at its HQ in Addis Ababa on 11-12 December 2019. It will bring together Government, law enforcement agencies, technology companies and civil society organisations and will provide attendees with the tools, knowledge and networks to tackle online child sexual exploitation.

[The Fund to End Violence Against Children](#)

The Fund to End Violence Against Children (EVAC) launched in 2016 and serves the international community by providing financial support towards activities and projects seeking to end violence against children and support to those affected by it. The Fund's strategy is aligned to the aims of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children – which is a UNICEF hosted initiative seeking to create a world where all children grow up safe from violence. Crucially, the Fund and Partnership recognise the need to respond to the threat of online violence towards children, including serious threats like online child sex abuse and exploitation. The Fund and Partnership work in collaboration, with the Partnership determining end violence strategies and the Fund providing financial support for the mobilisation of resources.

The Home Office has committed £40 million to the EVAC Fund to support activities intending to build international capacity to respond to the threat of online child sex abuse and exploitation.

To date, our £30 million investments have supported over 30 projects in 20 countries delivering; support to victims, technical solutions to detect and prevent offending, support to law enforcement and educational campaigns on ways to keep children safe online. Through our investment, over 48,000 children have been reached by prevention and awareness raising campaigns in over 20 countries, as well as 4,500 caregivers and educational providers.

[Trusted Relationships Fund](#)

Through the Trusted Relationships Fund we are identifying innovative approaches to tackling vulnerability among children and young people at risk of exploitation and abuse. Local authority-led projects went live in August 2018 in 11 areas across England.

The Fund supports projects working with children and young people (aged 10-17) who have been identified locally as at risk of child sexual exploitation or abuse, criminal exploitation and peer on peer abuse.

The Fund aims to build resilience to harm through fostering healthy, trusting relationships with responsible adults. By using a variety of methods to foster these relationships, we hope to improve understanding of emerging local threats, reduce victimisation and drive down demand on statutory services.

Through this and other early intervention funds, we are working to build a stronger evidence base on what works to protect young people from harm, so we can have confidence in and better target future investments, ensuring these reflect the needs of young people and effectively build resilience across vulnerable cohorts. We will disseminate learning from the 11 areas to other local authorities to maximise the value of the investment.

[Policing, Practices and Victims](#)

We have begun a step change in our approach to dealing with crimes against vulnerable children and people across the country and have invested significantly in a programme of reform to help the police to respond to changing crimes.

We have prioritised child sexual abuse as a national threat to empower police forces to maximise their specialist skills and expertise. This will facilitate prioritisation and planning of capabilities to tackle this terrible crime.

We are strengthening law enforcement capacity and capability and continue to provide funding to transform policing to respond to changing crimes and threats, including crimes against vulnerable individuals such as child sexual abuse.

We have worked with the College of Policing to draw up a package of changes to ensure the police are better placed to respond, including:

- enhanced coverage of vulnerability in the curriculum for the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, and in the Professionalising Investigation Programme;
- courses aimed at equipping undercover officers to undertake covert policing activity to tackle online CSEA; and
- the development of a licence to practise in high-harm and risk areas, with Public Protection and Safeguarding Leaders planned to be the first area for testing.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is inspecting the child protection work of every police in England and Wales through its National Child Protection Inspections. As part of these inspections, HMICFRS will continue to inspect against forces' awareness of and response to child sexual abuse and exploitation, including how well the service has helped and protected children and investigated these crimes.

As part of our £40 million package of measures announced in the Government's Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Progress report, we have recently published a child exploitation disruption toolkit. It brings together existing legislative powers to help local agencies to disrupt, deter and tackle the sexual and criminal exploitation of children and young people.

[Child House](#)

The UK Government has provided [£8m to pilot a 'Child House' model of support to victims of child sexual abuse in the UK](#). The Child House model is based on international best practice and provides a victim centred multi-agency approach to supporting child victims of sexual abuse under one roof. The first Child House, called 'the Lighthouse', opened in Camden in October 2018.

The Lighthouse will provide enhanced support to children and young people aged between 0-17 years old (or those between 18-25 years of age with learning delay or disability), as well as non-offending parents/carers/family for up to two years. The Lighthouse will offer a joined-up approach where, if required, victims can get access to all medical; practical; social care; police; and therapeutic support 'under one roof'.

[Support for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Fund \(SVSCSA\)](#)

Through the £0.6m SVSCSA fund, the Home Office provides supports to non-statutory organisations working at a national level to support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. In 2019/20, this funding will support organisations providing a telephone support line, victims' support groups, telephone and online therapeutic counselling and specialised support for children with learning difficulties who have experienced sexual abuse.

[Data Collection and the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse](#)

The Home Office has worked with other Government Departments and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to introduce a module of questions on child abuse (including child sexual abuse) into the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

A set of results based on the 2018/19 survey are due to be published early next year as part of a compendium of data sources ONS are producing to provide the best available evidence of child abuse. This work is being taken forward in collaboration with a range of Government departments and agencies and is planned for publication in early 2020.

The first set of results on abuse in childhood from the 2015/16 survey were published here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/abuseduringchildhood/findingsfromtheyearendinmarch2016crimesurveyforenglandandwales>.

In addition, ONS are currently conducting a feasibility study to determine whether a prevalence survey of child abuse could be effective; this would cover all forms of child abuse and include CSE. ONS will be publishing findings from the first stage of this research alongside the compendium early next year. Further information can be found here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/improvingcrimestatisticsforenglandandwalesprogressupdate#improving-child-abuse-statistics>

The Home Office has also funded the development of an independent Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre). The CSA Centre assesses UK and international evidence on prevalence and has published a series of reports exploring what is known about the scale and nature of CSA in England and Wales. Those reports can be found here: <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-publications/scale-and-nature-of-child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation/>

The CSA Centre is also generating new evidence on what works and identifying where gaps exist, through robustly evaluated pilot interventions and by commissioning research. It also provides practical support to commissioners and frontline professionals across local authorities, police, health services and the voluntary sector; embedding what works to prevent and tackle child sexual abuse, including child sexual exploitation, into practice. More information on the work of the CSA Centre can be found here: www.csacentre.org.uk

[Strategic Communications](#)

The UK Government is providing support to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, a charity specialising in sex offender behaviour management, to run a national communications campaign to prevent online offending and support long-term behaviour change. The campaign – *Stop It Now!* - is aimed at deterring individuals from accessing indecent images of children (IIOC) and signposting those concerned about their own or others behaviour to appropriate self-help resources and an anonymous helpline. The helpline offers advice and support to:

- Those worried about their own sexual thoughts or behaviours towards children, including those with concerns about their online behaviour;

- Adults worried about the behaviour of other adults or children or young people;
- Friends and relatives of people arrested for sexual offending, including internet offending;
- Any other adult with a concern about child sexual abuse – including survivors and professionals.

The campaign's content and resources provided are designed to help individuals understand and control sexually harmful behaviour online. A regular programme of media outreach and engagement ensures that this content reaches those who are concerned about their own behaviour and the wider public.

Callers agree actions that they can take to manage their behaviour and protect children as well as exploring other services and agencies available. Calls remain confidential and anonymous, unless a child is deemed to be at risk.

The UK Government has also worked with the Internet Watch Foundation, internet service providers and search engines to ensure that signposting to the Lucy Faithfull Foundation IIOC offender resources is displayed when individuals attempt to access blocked material, or use concerning keywords which indicate searches for indecent images of children. This drives a substantial number of individuals through to online self-help on an ongoing basis. At the start of 2019, the Lucy Faithfull Foundation had taken 24% more calls than in the same period in 2018. They have also seen a 40% surge in the number of people being helped by their Stop It Now! website.

[National Crime Agency Child Exploitation and Online Protection command \(NCA-CEOP\)](#)

Over the next 12 months, NCA-CEOP will continue to lead the whole system response to child sexual abuse and exploitation threats, harnessing the collective powers of law enforcement, Government, the voluntary sector and industry.

The NCA-CEOP Education team is a key response to the CSEA threat under the protect and prepare approach. They provide advice and support for ages 4 to 18 through the professional development of the children's workforce and by supporting parents and carers. The approach is heavily derived from research and the learning that comes from the NCA's operational experience unmatched by alternate resources. The CEOP Ambassadors' programme, which delivers to the educational professionals, is continually reviewed and updated throughout the year and is heavily subscribed to every month.

The approach is to deliver age appropriate, empowering learning opportunities developing children's knowledge, skills and confidence in order that they can: identify risk online, seek support from trusted sources, use Click CEOP reporting when appropriate and to collaborate with peers to create positive cultures around online activity, and challenge harmful norms. In 19/20 NCA-CEOP Education are creating a new "Digital Romance" resource particularly tailored for LGBTQ+ young people, and an early intervention programme for Harmful Sexual Behaviour and another demand led resource for identifying and coping with online blackmail which, based on research, will be targeted at older teens.

NCA-CEOP will continue to work collaboratively with industry and voluntary sector organisations to enhance their prevention, identification and reporting of online sexual exploitation and abuse. Where possible, we will share our knowledge and expertise about the crime to support industry's activity to drive up standards and security online. An example of this is our work with the gaming sector where we have established a strategic network of senior leaders within the sector to mutually enhance the reactive and proactive response to online CSEA. We are delivering round tables on a quarterly basis to progress joint projects,

share knowledge and expertise, and explore further collaborative opportunities to keep children safe online.

Modern Slavery

The Government views the slavery, including trafficking, of children as a very serious offence and recognises the particular vulnerabilities of child victims. Where children are found to be victims of modern slavery their safety and welfare are addressed as the priority. All local agencies (including local authorities, police and Border Force) have statutory duties to safeguard children regardless of nationality or immigration status.

The National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the system that identifies and supports potential victims of modern slavery on their path toward independence. The most recently published statistics from the National Crime Agency (NCA) show that referrals to the NRM for minors has increased 48% to 3,137 in 2018, compared to 2,118 in 2017. This increase is due, in the majority, to a continued increase in recorded NRM referrals related to the county lines criminal business model of exploiting vulnerable individuals and other forms of criminal labour exploitation.

The Government is currently reforming the NRM. The programme of reform includes improvements to support for victims before, during and after their time in the NRM and makes improvements to the way NRM works for children.

Part of these reforms is the establishment of independent Multi-Agency Assurance Panels (MAAPs) to review all negative conclusive grounds decisions made on cases referred to the Single Competent Authority (SCA). The MAAPs will form part of the end-to-end decision-making process that takes place within the SCA, adding a further level of scrutiny to every negative conclusive grounds decision.

The MAAPs will be chaired by an independent professional appointed via a public appointments process. Panel members are drawn from a selection of professions including from police/law enforcement local authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), all of whom have experience and knowledge of dealing with victims of modern slavery. To ensure the specific needs of children are identified and reflected through the decision-making process, when a child case is presented to a MAAP, the local authority and NGO panel members reviewing it must come from a child trafficking or safeguarding background.

As a further feature of the NRM Reform programme, we have been working with a broad range of NGOs through the existing Children's Task and Finish Group, to identify potential options to make the NRM more child friendly. A number of the recommendations suggested are being progressed, with some already incorporated into the recently revised and published SCA guidance. In addition, we have sought input from the NGOs on the revised versions of the notification letters the SCA will issue to children; we are currently working with the NSPCC to develop and undertake child specific training of SCA decision-makers and MAAPs and we are working with the Children's Task and Finish Group to review existing leaflets with the aim of developing a revised leaflet which explains the NRM to children.

Furthermore, to increase the awareness of child trafficking we commissioned an e-learning programme for existing Independent Advocates, which are a statutory provision available to all looked after children, and Border Force Safeguarding and Modern Slavery Officers. The training aims to improve the awareness of both Independent Advocates and Border Force officers along with increasing their understanding of the specific needs of trafficked children and how to support them.

[Independent Child Trafficking Advocates](#)

More direct support to children is provided by section 48 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which makes provision for [Independent Child Trafficking Advocates \(ICTAs\)](#). The main aim and purpose of the ICTA is to support and advocate on behalf of the child to ensure the child's best interests are reflected in the decision-making processes undertaken by the public authorities who are involved in the child's care and support, and that the child's well-being is promoted. ICTAs are an independent source of advice for trafficked children and they do not replace any existing provisions within a local authority.

ICTAs have now been rolled out to one third of local authorities in England and Wales. The Government is committed to the full national roll out of ICTAs across England and Wales. As part of the staggered rollout, in January 2017, the ICTA service was introduced into three early adopter sites: Greater Manchester, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and nationally in Wales. The model implemented in these sites provided one-to-one support for all trafficked children who were identified and were the responsibility of local authorities within the early adopter sites. The ICTAs involvement throughout the decision-making process aimed to ensure each child was protected from further harm, prevent possible repeat victimisation, re-trafficking or going missing and promote the child's recovery.

Following findings from the [interim report](#) of the model implemented in the early adopter sites (published in July 2018), a revised model was developed to reflect these findings. The revised model was implemented in three additional sites: West Midlands Combined Authority in October 2018, followed by the East Midlands and the London Borough of Croydon, in April 2019. The revised model continues to provide one-to-one support for children for who there is no one with parental responsibility for them in the UK; but also introduces an expert ICTA regional practice co-ordinator whose role is to focus on children who do have a figure with parental responsibility for them in the UK. The regional practice co-ordinator assumes a strategic role, working with professionals who are already engaged with and supporting the child, rather than directly working with the child. The three original early adopter sites transitioned to the revised model from January 2019.

[Child Trafficking Protection Fund](#)

Complementing the roll out of ICTAs, on 28 June 2016 the Government announced up to [£3m for a Child Trafficking Protection Fund \(CTPF\)](#). The CTPF had two objectives. First, victim support and recovery, including specialist care to trafficked children. Second, reducing vulnerability to exploitation, by preventing trafficked children from going missing and potentially being re-trafficked.

On 16 January 2017, [the Home Secretary announced £2.2m from the CTPF had been awarded to seven organisations to protect vulnerable children in the UK and overseas who are at risk of trafficking](#). The projects cover a range of proposals including tailored support for trafficking victims from various cultures, developing skills and expertise in local areas, and a specialist accommodation pilot. Projects funded by the CTPF include:

- IOM delivered culturally tailored training for foster carers looking after trafficked Vietnamese and Albanian children in the London Borough of Croydon;
- Unseen UK piloted an innovative model of specialist secure accommodation for trafficked children in Bristol;
- AFRUCA provided therapeutic care for trafficked African children in London;
- Coram Children's Legal Centre, in partnership with UNICEF Vietnam, researched the dynamics of child modern slavery in Vietnam. Learning from this will be used to design and deliver of inter-agency capacity building, and develop strategies for legal, policy and practice reform;

- Barnardo's provided group based therapeutic support to victims of CSE across West Yorkshire and work with local authorities to improve early identification of CSE;
- The Children's Society provided 1-1 and group therapeutic support to trafficked boys in London;
- ECPAT UK provided a specialist consultancy service to improve the ability of four local authorities to identify and support child trafficking victims.

The CTPF completed on 31 March 2019. An independent evaluation of the seven projects, led by the University of Bedfordshire, is currently underway due to be published in the autumn. On 14 June 2019, CTPF project leads joined projects leads from the Modern Slavery Innovation fund for a joint 'end of project event' at the Home Office. This provided an important opportunity for project leads to share findings and reflect on what went well, lessons learned as well as the gaps for future research.

[Modern Slavery Act 2015](#)

In addition to these support provisions, our legislation provides legal protection for victims of slavery who are forced to commit certain crimes by their exploiters. Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 created a statutory defence for victims in such circumstances, strengthening the existing (and continuing) prosecutorial discretion. A defendant will have to meet certain criteria to raise the defence successfully and the Act makes further provision for children in such circumstances – by removing the “compulsion” test and lowering the threshold for meeting the “reasonable person” test – recognising their unique vulnerabilities.

The Government is committed to strengthening and enhancing the Modern Slavery Act to ensure it continues to evolve along with the crime of modern slavery. It is for this reason the Government commissioned Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss in 2018 to undertake an independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The review's purpose was to report on the operation and effectiveness of the Act, which provides the legal framework for tackling modern slavery in the UK. It considered potential improvements to the Act to ensure that it is fit for purpose now and in the future. Sections 45 and 48 of the Act were considered in the Review, specifically how to ensure the right support for child victims is provided given the changing profile of child victims. The Government welcomes the findings of the Independent Review and is considering its recommendations on the improvements we can make to the ICTA service. We remain committed to rolling out ICTAs nationally as soon as possible. The final report is available at: www.gov.uk/Government/publications/independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act-final-report.

The UK Government will respond to the report in summer 2019.

Borders, Immigration and Citizenship

[Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children & Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 'Dubs amendment'](#)

The UK is committed to relocating 480 unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) from Europe under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. Over 220 children were transferred to the UK under section 67 when the Calais camp was cleared in late 2016. Since then we have been making further progress with participating States, France, Greece, and Italy, to refer and transfer more eligible children.

To help us move closer in 2019/20 to achieving this commitment, on 15 June 2018, [we announced a new route to settlement for those children transferred under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 who do not qualify for international protection](#). Furthermore, on 20

December 2018, we took the decision to remove the date criterion for when children needed to have arrived in Europe to qualify for transfer to the UK. This change ensured that participating States were able to identify and refer the most vulnerable children whose best interests were served by transfer to the UK under section 67, regardless of when they arrived into Europe.

The relocation of eligible children to the UK is dependent on the availability of appropriate local authority care placements. In May 2019, the Home Office significantly increased the funding paid as a contribution to the costs incurred by local authorities. It is hoped that this will enable more local authorities to feel able to offer placements for vulnerable UASC.

The Government is committed under Section 17 of the Withdrawal Act 2018 to seek to negotiate with the EU an agreement which, after we leave the EU, will allow for the transfer of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to the UK to join family members who are lawfully resident or seeking asylum in the UK, where it is in the child's best interests to do so, and for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK to join family members in EU states in equivalent circumstances. This will ensure we continue to reunite vulnerable unaccompanied children in Europe with their family members in the UK after we cease to participate in the mechanism to do so under the Dublin Regulation. We will continue to fulfil our obligations under the Dublin Regulation while we are members of the EU and during any implementation period.

[Family and Human Rights Policy](#)

On the family side, we have made changes to guidance and delivered training to decision-makers handling human rights (HR) applications and claims, to clarify the position on cases that involve consideration of the best interests of a child and to give examples of where it may, in certain circumstances, be reasonable to expect a child to leave the UK with their parent(s).

This follows the findings in the Supreme Court in the cases of KO (Nigeria) and AB (Jamaica) which galvanised our thinking on family life with a qualifying child and sets out that:

In accordance with the findings in the case of AB Jamaica (Secretary of State for the Home Department v AB (Jamaica) & Anor [2019] EWCA Civ 661), consideration of whether it is reasonable to expect a child to leave the UK must be undertaken regardless of whether the child is actually expected to leave the UK.

The guidance has been clarified to set out that the starting point is that we would not normally expect a qualifying child to leave the UK. It is normally in a child's best interests for the whole family to remain together, which means if the child is not expected to leave, then the parent or parents or primary carer of the child will also not be expected to leave the UK and vice versa.

In the case law of KO and Others 2018 UKSC53, with particular reference to the case of NS (Sri Lanka), the Supreme Court found that "reasonableness" is to be considered in the real-world context in which the child finds themselves. The parents' immigration status is a relevant fact to establish that context. The determination sets out that if a child's parents are both expected to leave the UK, the child is normally expected to leave with them, unless there is evidence that that it would not be reasonable.

These clarifications and examples in guidance seek to recalibrate and gain greater consistency in decision-making, especially in cases where a child is affected by the decision and was driven partly due to a high rate of allowed appeals, where the Tribunal was taking a more consistent approach to decision-making than immigration caseworkers were.

In 2018, the policy on requesting DNA was clarified (to ensure compliance and consistency), in cases that pivoted on there being a genuine parental relationship to a qualifying child in particular. Whilst this was not a policy change, new guidance and decision-maker training was delivered (in collaboration with Family Policy), to clarify that DNA is not mandatory but can be taken in to account when provided in support of an application.

Asylum Operations – Training

The Asylum Operations Learning and Development Team have recently completed a comprehensive review of its Keeping Children Safe Tier 3 (KCS3) training course in order to ensure it is as up-to-date and effective as possible.

KCS3 is an interactive classroom-based course where delegates are provided with the information and skills to process, interview, assess and decide asylum applications by children whilst ensuring they are compliant with UKVI's statutory obligations.

The course follows the journey from entry into the UK and covers all the child-specific actions unique to children's asylum applications, including how to make a Best Interests assessment for an asylum-seeking child.

Asylum Decision Makers deemed competent enough to process children's claims receive KCS3 and roll-out of the newly designed course commences in July 2019.

Office of the Children's Champion

The Office of the Children's Champion (OCC) has an ongoing role in safeguarding children in contact with the immigration system.

Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 places a duty on the Home Secretary to make arrangements for ensuring that immigration, asylum, nationality and customs functions are discharged whilst having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The guidance, which was introduced to support the implementation of section 55 states (para 2.9):

“There shall be a senior member of staff (the “Children’s Champion”) who is responsible to the Chief Executive of the UK Border Agency for promoting the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children throughout the UK Border Agency, for offering advice and support to UK Border Agency staff in issues related to children, and identifying and escalating areas of concern.”

Currently, the OCC is supported by a team comprising a mix of three civil servants and two professional social workers.

The OCC is deliberately independent of immigration departmental governance structures and acts as a critical friend to the department, offering support, advice and challenge. Core functions include:

- Advising on and reviewing Home Office safeguarding operational practice for migrant children and families, unaccompanied migrant children, and increasingly vulnerable adults – ensuring s55 duties are met.
- Professional advice on individual cases concerning child safeguarding and vulnerability.
- Professional perspective and advice on reviewing and developing new policy or guidance documents concerning safeguarding issues

- Offering independent internal scrutiny on Home Office commissioned services specific to children, families and vulnerable adults (e.g. grants to charities and voluntary sector, plus private sector asylum services etc.).
- Leading relationship management for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) for the Home Office
- Providing e-learning training on child safeguarding across the HO. Advise on and review other Home Office safeguarding training.

OCC advisers use their experience and expertise in multi-disciplinary statutory child and adult protection procedures to inform and develop strategy and advice. Advisers can commission further enquiries on vulnerable cases and cut across the immigration system to bring together similar strands of work. OCC advisers use their working knowledge of child and adult protection to broker discussions between the immigration department and statutory services, particularly when there are complex relationship issues or high-profile cases.

Although originally focused on children and specific to the immigration functions, over time and as the only professional in-house source of relevant safeguarding expertise, the OCC has become involved in other policy areas including missing persons, modern slavery, and some CSE issues. A number of Safeguarding leads, specialist case working teams and "hubs" have been established to provide more expert support to operational and case working colleagues."

In addition, there is access to a recently formed youth empowerment forum to consult on policy and any other areas to hear the views and feelings of children. This forum is accessible for any issues where their views would help in shaping policy and operational practice.

Immigration Enforcement

Training

Immigration Enforcement (IE) are rolling out Vulnerability training to all IE staff and this contains a module regarding children and our responsibility to safeguard all children.

Operation Innerste

Operation Innerste is an emerging model for improving the outcomes for unaccompanied children.

The process aims to ensure that unaccompanied migrant children found in the UK are appropriately safeguarded by ensuring that the child's welfare is prioritised. The police, working with partners such as children's Social Services to complete an initial welfare assessment, ensure that risks to the child are assessed early so that effective measures can be put in place; not arresting children and taking them into custody, but instead taking them to a suitable place where the initial welfare assessment can take place. Biometric information such as fingerprints and photographs are taken during the welfare assessment to help law enforcement agencies locate children if they subsequently go missing. The process has been successful in reducing missing incidents of the children it has identified, as these measures help build trust between the child and the UK authorities, reducing the likelihood of them running away. National rollout of this initiative has commenced.

Operation Innerste aims to mitigate the risk associated with the hold often exerted by traffickers and others seeking to exploit child migrants arriving in the UK. These children may have little reliable information about the support they will receive from the state. Traffickers and other offenders seeking to exploit children will commonly encourage a child to go missing as a means of facilitating exploitation. Providing clear information can help reduce the influence of perpetrators and avoid the re-exploitation of vulnerable

Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) and ICE Officer secondments to CTAC

The Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) is a Non-Governmental Organisation operated by the NSPCC since 2007. It is a national service provider offering advice and support, as well as delivering training and presentations, to different professionals who have an obligation to safeguarding or/and child protection. It was initially funded by the Home Office and Comic Relief and is now mainly operated by the NSPCC.

As part of the Home Office response to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT), which is one of the top priorities with the current Enforcement Control strategy, a member of the HO CFI team has been seconded to the CTAC team at the NSPCC for a period of two years (upon review). An immigration enforcement officer has also been seconded to the CTAC team for a period of one year.

Modern Slavery Innovation Fund (MSIF)

The CFI seconded officer also has an additional role within the MSIF. This Government funded initiative is targeted at providing support to the victims of human trafficking in their country of origin, offering training and support to identify forms of child Modern Slavery, and their vulnerabilities, increase coordination between different agencies in Ghana and Vietnam and promote welfare of children exposed to Modern Slavery. This includes delivering training to Immigration Enforcement, Specialist Human Trafficking Investigative teams and Police officers as well as social welfare, NGO'S and Health, within those countries. The seconded officer has been involved in work with exploited children support groups such as Afrikids and Unact, in both Ghana and Vietnam, attending street Theatre groups and educational seminars.

Ministry for Defence (MoD)

How the UK safeguards Service children and 16-18 years olds serving in the armed forces.

Directorate Children & Young People

In 2010, the UK MOD created a Directorate Children & Young People to ensure that the rights of all Service Children (under both the UNCRC and the UK Children Acts) are protected, whether those Service Children are living in the UK or overseas. The UK definition of a 'Service Child' includes Service Personnel subject to the UK's Children Acts, as well as the children of Service Personnel. As well as protecting those Service Children under the age of 18, the UK's Children Acts also provide safeguards up to the age of 21 for those Service Children previously in the care of a Local Authority.

The key governance bodies that hold to account the MOD's delivery on behalf of Service Children are the Defence Children and Young People Board (which is attended by all elements of the MOD with responsibilities for children and young people, and chaired at three-star level), and the Defence Safeguarding Partnership Board (independently chaired by an experienced safeguarding practitioner from outside the MOD). In April 2013 the then Children's Commissioner for England (Dr Maggie Atkinson) was invited to brief the MOD Children and Young People Trust Board on the detail of the UNCRC, and its implications for the formulation of MOD legislation and policy.

The MOD's Defence Children and Young People Plan promotes a range of Participation Strategies to ensure that Service Children are consulted before programmes, projects and issues that affect them are developed and embedded in youth provision across the Armed Forces policies, procedures and delivery. Moreover the TORs for the Defence Children and Young People Board specify that the Board 'through its links with the Command level (and, where applicable, local Garrison/Station/Isolated Detachment (ISODET) level CYP Board arrangements will ensure that it explores the wishes and feelings of children and young people and their parents/carers about the priorities underpinning the CYP Plan and the impact of services available to support them.

All our MOD CYP policies are drawn from the overarching policies of OGDs (mainly, but not exclusively, DfE), and thus mirror the UNCRC-compliance that those OGDs judge to be appropriate.

Under 18s in the UK Armed Forces

The UK Armed Forces policies on under-18s in Service fully comply with national and international law. In addition to the comprehensive welfare system that is in place for all Service personnel we remain fully committed to meeting our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and have taken steps to bestow special safeguards on young people under the age of 18, including a bar on participation in combat operations.

The minimum age for entry into the Armed Forces is 16. Parental or guardian consent is required before any Under 18 candidate engages in Armed Forces recruiting activity and at various stages during the application process, and parents and guardians are positively encouraged to engage with the recruiting staff during the process.

Suitability checks are carried out on instructors who will come into contact with Under 18s, with the Supervisory Care Directive articulating the appropriate levels of supervision in the training environment.

Under 18 service is compatible with the Optional Protocol – prohibiting participation in armed conflict. Under 18s are not to deploy to any operations outside the UK, except where the operation does not involve engagement in, or exposure to, Hostilities.

When an Under 18 candidate is offered a 'job' they are also provided with detail on the facility to seek Discharge as of Right (DAOR) and their terms of service in general. Before candidates are enlisted written consent is required. This process is exhaustive and specifically designed to ensure the candidate and parent or guardian understands what they are consenting to. All recruits and their parents or guardians arriving at the Army Foundation College Harrogate are informed verbally of their terms of service, including their right to leave the Army until their 18th birthday, by their Commanding Officer or Officer Commanding. At enlistment, all recruits are informed of their terms of service and minimum commitment period, receive a copy of their terms of service and sign a clear single page form to declare they have read and understood these terms.

All recruits aged under 18 receive key skills education in literacy and numeracy, should they need it, and the vast majority are enrolled onto apprenticeships. Over 95% of all recruits, no matter what their age or prior qualifications, enrol on an apprenticeship each year. The Armed Forces are one of the UK's largest apprenticeship provider and offer courses in a wide range of skills, such as engineering, information and communications technology, construction, driving, and animal care.

For Army recruits, Basic Junior Entry Phase 1 training is delivered at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate to Junior Soldiers aged between 16 and 17.5 years old at the start of their training. The timing of Phase 1 and 2 is synchronised so that Junior Soldiers are delivered to the Field Army on or as close to their 18th birthday as possible. Beyond military training, Junior Soldiers are given additional learning and development opportunities in comparison to Standard Entrants in recognition of their younger age, in particular to develop numeracy and literacy skills.

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

The Troubled Families Programme

The Troubled Families Programme (2015-2020) supports families struggling with complex, interconnected problems such as unemployment; poor school attendance; health problems; involvement in crime; and domestic abuse.

The programme is delivered by all upper tier local authorities in England and their partners including police, Jobcentre Plus, schools, health organisations, schools, housing providers, voluntary community services and others. The goal is for public services to work together to provide an integrated, 'whole family' approach that recognises and deals with their overlapping and interconnected problems through better coordinated and more effective support to families. By providing early and targeted support to help families with complex and challenging needs thrive, the programme aims to reduce demand and dependency on costly, reactive public services, and deliver better value for the taxpayer.

To be eligible for the Troubled Families Programme, each family must include dependent children and have at least two of the following six headline problems:

- Parents or children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Children who have not been attending school regularly.
- Children who need help: children of all ages who need help are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness.
- Families affected by violence against women and girls.
- Parents or children with a range of health problems.

Local authorities and their partners are expected to prioritise the families with multiple problems who are of most concern locally and cause the highest reactive costs; appoint a keyworker who manages each family and their problems; work towards agreed goals, which are shared and jointly owned across local partners; and be transparent about outcomes, benefits and costs.

Building Resilient Families, the Troubled Families Programme's third annual report, and the programme's latest evaluation findings were both published in March 2019. The evaluation results show that, compared to a matched comparison group, 19-24 months after joining the programme:

- the proportion of children on the programme going into care has reduced by a third.
- the proportion of adults on the programme going to prison has reduced by a quarter and juvenile convictions reduced by 15 per cent.
- more people on the programme are back in work, with 10 per cent fewer people claiming Jobseekers Allowance.

As of March 2019, the programme had funded areas to work with nearly 400,000 families in most need of help. However, we know that local authorities are working in a whole family way with a far greater number of families. As of March 2019, approximately 200,000 families had achieved significant and sustained progress across all their headline problems that were

identified when they entered the programme. In over 20,000 of these families one or more adults had moved off benefits and into work.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for Youth Justice Policy and the following is a summary of ongoing work that is particularly relevant to children's rights.

Criminal Records

We are committed to supporting children to turn their lives around. We changed the law in 2013 and 2014 so that minor offences no longer need to be disclosed. Rehabilitation periods (the period of time needed before a caution or conviction can be considered 'spent', and therefore doesn't need to be disclosed for most purposes) and filtering periods (the period of time needed before spent cautions or convictions can be 'filtered' off of Standard and Enhanced DBS certificates) are also significantly shorter for youth offences. We have noted the Supreme Court judgment in *P and others* and will consider the ruling carefully before responding. Alongside the judgment, we remain committed to considering the recommendations for broader reform made in reviews by the Justice Select Committee, The Lammy Review, Charlie Taylor and the Law Commission. We have just announced our intention to amend spending periods within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, to allow some sentences of over 4 years to become 'spent' (meaning they no longer need to be disclosed, for most purposes) for the first time. We intend to spend the Summer engaging with stakeholders and those who have received childhood convictions, to inform legislative changes to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Disproportionality

In October 2018, we published an update showing progress in tackling racial disparities in the criminal justice system, including an update against each of David Lammy's recommendations (this report, published in October 2017, examined disproportionate outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System).³ We will publish another update later this year. [We have created a dedicated team within the Youth Justice Policy Unit to work closely with the Youth Justice Board \(YJB\) on disproportionality.](#) This team is taking a broad view of how Government and others can tackle the causes of disproportionality in the youth justice system, identifying the key points where disparity is likely to impact in a child's life. This includes points before any engagement with the police, as well as once a child has entered the youth justice system.

Data analysis published in 2017 found disproportionality in the likelihood of custody for Black and Asian young people for comparable proven offences.⁴ A number of factors are likely to have influenced the change in the ethnic makeup of the youth custodial population. We are working with stakeholders, including the Magistrates Association, to understand and address the factors that may influence disproportionate sentencing outcomes.

³ Ministry of Justice (2018). 'Tackling Racial Disparity in the Criminal Justice System: 2018 Update'. London: Ministry of Justice, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/747335/tackling-racial-disparity-criminal-justice-system-2018-update-web.pdf

⁴ Bhamra, H.S. and S.C.N. Uhrig (2017), 'Trends in associations between ethnic background and being sentenced to custody for young offenders in England and Wales between 2009-2016', London: Ministry of Justice, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/669095/Race_and_the_CJS-youth-amended-01122017.pdf.

Youth Secure Estate

Secure Schools

Our long-term ambition is to have a secure estate made up of secure children's homes and secure schools, a new form of youth custody. We want secure schools to replace secure training centres (STCs) and young offender institutions (YOIs). Secure Schools will be small custodial establishments of up to 70 places located in the regions that they serve. They will combine the ethos and practice of the best alternative provision schools with the structure and support of the best secure children's homes. Secure schools will have child-focused and creative providers, strong leaders with freedom and autonomy, and a specialised workforce - putting education, healthcare and purposeful activity at the heart of youth custody.

A psychologically informed approach to healthcare, which addresses the social, emotional and developmental needs of young people, will be adopted.

For Secure Schools in the 'How to Apply Guide, we have asked providers to outline how their school's behaviour management systems and strategies will be easy to understand, clearly communicated and implemented consistently and fairly and how they will monitor them, how they will deal with challenging behaviour and how this can be linked to therapeutic support. We have also asked them how they plan to measure and track changes in students' behaviour from the time they enter the secure school until their release date.

The Use of Restraint

The safety and welfare of children in custody is our highest priority. Restraint is only ever used as a last resort, where there is a risk of harm, and no other form of intervention is possible or appropriate. That is why we asked Charlie Taylor, the chair of the YJB, but acting in an independent capacity, to undertake a review of pain-inducing restraint techniques and we expect his report this summer.

Our approach to restraint is always to minimise its use, through both de-escalation and diversion strategies, and a wider approach to behaviour management. Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) is used in all STCs and under-18 YOIs. This has been specifically developed for use by staff working with children in custody to avoid physical restraint as far as possible by using a range of de-escalation, diversion and behaviour management techniques to help deal with issues effectively and appropriately.

Regarding Secure Schools we stated in the JCHR restraint review (Oct 2018), '*Secure schools will combine the ethos and best practice of schools and will be expected to adhere to the Department for Education (DfE)'s statutory guidance for children's homes. As such they will not use pain inducing techniques.*' Therefore, although it will be permissible for staff in a secure school to restrain a student, techniques, which deliberately inflict pain, will not be permitted, and all restraint must be necessary and proportionate.

Inspection of the Secure Youth Estate

All under-18 YOIs are subject to regular scrutiny and comprehensive inspection by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), the Independent Monitoring Board and other regulatory bodies to monitor the safety and welfare of children in custody. Ofsted, accompanied by HMIP and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), inspects STCs on an annual basis.

Training of relevant professionals and awareness raising programmes

In 2017, we established our youth custody reform programme with the aim of improving levels of safety in the youth secure estate. The programme is underpinned by the Youth Custody Service's (YCS) new evidence-based positive behaviour strategy - 'Building Bridges' which was published in February this year to provide a framework for developing positive relationships between staff and children.

Through our reform programme, we have increased the number of frontline staff in public-sector sites by approximately 40% since December 2016,⁵ introduced a youth justice specialist role and provided funding for every Prison Officer in the YCS to undertake a youth justice qualification and transition to the role over the next four years. We have also developed Enhanced Support Units for those with the most complex needs.

⁵ This also includes staffing level changes in the adult side of Feltham

UK data protection laws and the child

Statutory code of practice on age-appropriate design

The Data Protection Act 2018 (the “DPA 2018”) introduced a requirement for the Information Commissioner to produce a statutory code of practice on age-appropriate design and submit this to the DCMS Secretary of State within 18 months of the DPA coming into force, for laying in Parliament. The DPA 2018 states that before preparing the code, or any subsequent amendments, the Information Commissioner must consult with children, parents, persons who represent the interests of children, child development experts and trade associations.

The age-appropriate design code provides practical guidance on how to design data protection safeguards into online services to ensure they are appropriate for use by, and meet the development needs of children, while making clear what data is being collected on children, how this data is being used, and how both children and parents can stay in control of this data.

It takes account of the standards and principles set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and sets out that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. It also aims to respect the rights and duties of parents, and the child’s evolving capacity to make their own choices.

In particular, the code aims to ensure that online services use children’s data in ways that support the rights of the child to:

- freedom of expression;
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- freedom of association;
- privacy;
- access information from the media;
- play and engage in recreational activities appropriate to their age;
- protection from economic, sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Additional Data Protection Information

Age a child is able to give their consent for the processing of their own personal data by information society services (ISS)

The GDPR distinguishes children as a special category of person requiring specific protection as regards their personal data. The GDPR specifies that parents or guardians must give consent to personal data processing on behalf of very young children using information society services; except in the context of preventive or counselling services offered directly to a child.

The GDPR allows member states to set the threshold for the minimum age at which a child can consent to data processing to any age between 13 years and 16 years. The UK Government set the minimum age to 13 years.

During the Government’s call for view on implementing the GDPR there were calls for better enforcement of any age control which the Government is addressing as part of the work on

the Internet Safety Strategy. The Government's view is that in the absence of reliable age verification tools for children under the age of 18, rather than restricting children's access to information services, a better approach is to educate children to keep them safe online and to build a shared responsibility between internet services providers, app makers, social media providers and others to make the internet safer.

Research shows that whilst there are risks for children online, there are also benefits for children from using online technologies such as greater opportunities for socialisation and communication. These activities could lead to improved self-esteem, perceived social support and increased social capital. By setting the age of consent at 13, more children the right to express their opinions online, as supported by Articles 13 and 17 of the UNCRC. Examples of evidence considered during the development of the Data Protection Act 2018: https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/files/120352496/Final_Online_Communication_Social_Media_and_Adolescent_Wellbeing.pdf
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mediapolicyproject/2015/12/18/no-more-social-networking-for-young-teens/>

Requirements on business and organisations to make Privacy notices accessible to children Children have the same rights as adults over their personal data. These include the right to access their personal data; request rectification; object to processing and have their personal data erased.

In order to allow children to understand the implications of sharing their personal data and to exercise their own data protection rights, the GDPR stipulated that clear, accessible, privacy notices should be designed specifically for children. Children should understand why the personal data asked for is required, what it will be used for, and the risks involved.

The Information Commission provides further guidance and good practice to controllers and processors on child friendly ways of presenting privacy information, such as: diagrams, cartoons, graphics and videos, dashboards, layered and just-in-time notices, icons and symbols. They must explain to children, in a way that they can understand, why the personal data asked for is required and what it will be used for, as well as the risks involved, so that children understand the implications of sharing their personal data.
(<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/key-data-protection-themes/children/>)

The right to be forgotten and the child

The GDPR and the Information Commissioner make it clear that if an individual wants their personal data to be erased that they provided when they were a child, then organisations should comply with their wishes subject to certain exemptions - see below for further details. In a situation where a data subject provided their data when they were a child, without fully understanding the implications of doing so, there will generally be an increased expectation of what may be considered 'necessary' to protect the rights of the child. So the right to erasure is more likely to prevail in this circumstance than if data was provided by an adult. However, the further retention of the personal data should be lawful where it is necessary, for exercising the right of freedom of expression and information, for compliance with a legal obligation, for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller, on the grounds of public interest in the area of public health, for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes, or for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims.

Representation of data subjects

The DPA 2018 places a duty on the Government to review the operations of representation of data subjects in the exercise of their rights to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner, their right to judicial remedy against the Information Commissioner, controller or processor, and a right to compensation and liability. When undertaking this review the Secretary of State must consider the merits of making provisions for a children's rights organisation to exercise some or all of these rights on behalf of a child, with or without being authorised to do so by the child. As well as taking into consideration the:

- particular needs of children separately from the needs of adults,
- the fact that children have different needs at different stages of development, and
- any challenges that children face in authorising, and deciding whether to authorise other persons to act as their representative, and
- what support and advice is available to children in connection with the exercise of these rights.

Before preparing the report the Secretary of State must consult with various stakeholders including children and parents, children's rights organisations and other persons who appear to the Secretary of State to represent the interests of children, and child development experts.

Health Ethics

UK Legislative Framework on assisted conception and legal parenthood

The Human Fertilisation Act 1990, as amended by the Human Fertilisation Act 2008, sets the legal framework for the donation and use of own or donated eggs, sperm and embryos in fertility treatment in the UK, underpinned by provisions for the welfare of the child. The Act also sets out provisions to determine the legal parent(s) of children conceived using donated eggs, sperm, embryos or through surrogacy. Legal parenthood provides a lifelong legal parent-child connection, which affects a wide range of areas such as the child's nationality, inheritance and financial responsibility for the child. The Act also ensures that children can find out about their donor and genetic origins when they reach the age of 16 and 18 on a register held by the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority.

Law Commission Review of legislation on surrogacy

The Law Commission is reviewing all surrogacy legislation as part of a three-year project and is currently publicly consulting on proposals for change. The proposals would provide more clarity for those taking part in surrogacy arrangements around legal parenthood, introduce regulatory oversight of the system to ensure the welfare of children is central to the surrogacy pathway, including a new register for children to trace their genetic origins.

DHSC position on consent and intersex surgery

Patients have a fundamental legal and ethical right to determine what happens to their own bodies. Valid consent to treatment is therefore central to all forms of healthcare, from providing personal care to undertaking major surgery

If children have the capacity to give consent for themselves, consent should be sought directly from them.

Once young people reach the age of 16, they are presumed in law to be competent to give consent for themselves for their own surgical, medical or dental treatment, and any associated procedures, such as investigations, anaesthesia or nursing care.

Those under 16 are not automatically presumed to be legally competent to make decisions about their healthcare. However, the courts have stated that under 16s will be competent to give valid consent to a particular intervention if they have "sufficient understanding and intelligence to enable him or her to understand fully what is proposed" (i.e. Gillick competence).

If a child is not competent to give consent for themselves, consent should be sought from a person with parental responsibility. This will often, but not always, be the child's parent. Legally, consent is only needed from one person with parental responsibility.

As is the case where patients are giving consent for themselves, those giving consent on behalf of child patients must have the capacity to consent to the intervention in question, be acting voluntarily and be appropriately informed. The power to consent must be exercised according to the 'welfare principle': that the child's 'welfare' or 'best interests' must be paramount. Even where a child lacks capacity to consent on their own behalf, it is good practice to involve the child as much as possible in the decision-making process.

Where necessary, the courts can overrule a refusal by a person with parental responsibility. It is recommended that certain important decisions, such as sterilisation for contraceptive purposes, should be referred to the courts for guidance, even if those with parental responsibility consent to the operation going ahead.

Doctors are legally and ethically bound (a) to only give a patient treatment with the patient's consent; and (b) to act in the best interests of their patient. In some situations, clinicians may decide that it is in a patient's best interests to be given palliative care only and not life sustaining treatment. In such a case, even if a patient wanted pro-active life sustaining treatment, a clinician could not lawfully or ethically give that treatment as this would be in breach of the doctor's duty of care to provide proper medical care. To do so is contrary to the Hippocratic Oath and Good Medical Practice Guidance issued by the General Medical Council under the Medical Act 1983. This would be a professional regulatory issue and not one on which the NHS or DHSC could issue guidance.

The Government Equalities Office recently launched a call for evidence to understand the experiences and needs of people with variations in sex characteristics.