



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 9 October 2025

6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Democratic Services:	Paige Starkey	01952 380110
Media Enquiries:	Corporate Communications	01952 382406

Committee Members:	Councillors L Parker (Chair), C Chikandamina (Vice-Chair), E Aston, S P Burrell, A S Jhawar, J Kaur, I Preece, K Tonks and J Urey
	Co-optees S Fikeis and C Morgan

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	To receive a briefing on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill outlining the reforms to Children's Social Care and the Families First Partnership Programme.	

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Briefing Note

Thursday 9 October 2025

Children's Wellbeing and School Bill

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills.	
Lead Directors:	Darren Knibbs – Director: Children’s Safeguarding and Family Support Simon Wellman - Director: Education & Skills	
Service Area:	Children Services / Education and Skills	
Report Author:	Darren Knibbs / Simon Wellman	
Officer Contact Details	Tel: 01952 380800	Email: Darren.knibbs@telford.gov.uk Simon.wellman@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The [Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) aims to improve the education and care systems for children in the UK. The Bill is a key step towards delivering the government’s Opportunity Mission to break the link between young people’s background and their future success. It will put in place a package of support to drive high and rising standards throughout our education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive. It will protect children at risk of abuse, stopping vulnerable children falling through cracks in services, and deliver a core guarantee of high standards with space for innovation in every child’s education.
- 1.2 The bill will provide the necessary legislation to enact the policy statement [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) which the DfE published in November 2024.
- 1.3 **Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive**



1.4 Vision and Goals

- Child-Centred Approach: Focus on keeping families together, improving outcomes for children in care, and breaking down barriers to opportunity.
- Support for Families: Prioritise early intervention and support to prevent crises and keep families together.

1.5 Legislative Changes

- Family Group Decision Making: Mandate local authorities to offer family-led care planning before initiating care proceedings.
- Data Sharing: Introduce a Single Unique Identifier to improve information sharing across agencies.
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding: Strengthen the role of education in safeguarding and establish multi-agency child protection teams.
- Home Education: Require local authority consent for home education in cases of safeguarding concerns.
- Corporate Parenting: Extend corporate parenting responsibilities to a wider range of public bodies.
- Virtual School Heads: Extend the role to promote educational outcomes for children with a social worker and in kinship care.
- Staying Close Support: Provide support for care leavers to find and maintain suitable accommodation.

1.6 Care System Reforms

- Quality of Homes: Improve the quality and accountability of children's homes, including new legislation for unregistered homes.
- Regional Care Co-operatives: Enable local authorities to collaborate on care placements and market shaping.
- Financial Oversight: Introduce a scheme to monitor the financial health of key care providers and prevent sudden closures.
- Profit Cap: Empower the Secretary of State to cap profits of children's social care providers if necessary.
- Agency Workers: Regulate the use of agency workers in children's social care to ensure stability and quality.

1.7 Implementation and Support

- Training and Development: Enhance training for staff and support for kinship carers.
- Community Engagement: Strengthen ties with families and communities to support kinship care and family-led solutions.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Conduct regular audits and reviews to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.



These measures aim to create a more equitable, high-quality, and safe education and care system for all children.

2.0 **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill**

2.1 Overview

- Purpose: To break the link between young people's background and their future success, ensuring every child can achieve and thrive.
- Main Benefits: Child-centred government, keeping families together, supporting children in care, cracking down on excessive profit-making, driving high standards, removing barriers to opportunity, and creating a safer education system.

To note: Whilst the Bill sets out important first steps, there will be a need for further legislation in this parliament that focuses on children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). A clear vision of reform for this long-overlooked area of support is crucial and must not be seen in isolation from other improvements to children's service.

2.2 **Children Social Care Measures:**

- Family Group Decision Making: Mandates local authorities to offer family-led care planning.
- Strengthening Education's Role in Safeguarding: Ensures education settings are part of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams: Establishes teams to support local authorities in child protection duties.
- Information Sharing and Consistent Identifiers: Improves data sharing between agencies for better safeguarding.
- Kinship Local Offer: Requires local authorities to publish support available for kinship carers.
- Staying Close: Provides support for care leavers to find and keep suitable accommodation.
- Local Offer for Care Leavers: Requires local authorities to publish support plans for care leavers.
- Regional Co-operation Arrangements: Allows the Secretary of State to direct local authorities to collaborate on care placements.
- Use of Accommodation for Depriving Liberty: Provides a framework for authorizing deprivation of liberty in non-secure settings.
- Provider Oversight Regime: Strengthens Ofsted's powers to hold provider groups accountable.
- Ofsted Powers to Issue Monetary Penalties: Expands Ofsted's ability to fine for breaches of care standards.
- Financial Oversight Scheme: Monitors financial health of key care providers to prevent sudden closures.



- Future Profit Cap: Enables the Secretary of State to cap profits of children's social care providers if necessary.
- Children's Social Care Agency Workers: Regulates the use of agency workers in children's social care.
- Ill-Treatment or Wilful Neglect: Extends protections against abuse to 16-17-year-olds in care settings.
- Employment of Children: Updates regulations to allow more flexibility in child employment while ensuring safety and education.

2.3 School Measures:

- Free Breakfast Club Provision: Requires state-funded primary schools to provide free breakfast clubs.
- School Uniforms: Limits the number of compulsory branded uniform items to reduce costs for parents.
- Children Not in School: Introduces compulsory registers for children not in school and strengthens support and safeguarding.
- Virtual School Head: Extends the role to promote educational achievement for children with a social worker and in kinship care.
- Expanding Scope of Regulation: Brings more educational settings under regulatory oversight.
- Independent Education Setting and Safeguarding: Enhances due diligence, inspection, and enforcement powers for independent schools.
- Teacher Misconduct: Broadens the scope of the teacher misconduct regime to include more settings and allows the Department for Education to make referrals.
- School Teachers' Qualifications and Induction: Requires new teachers in academies to have Qualified Teacher Status and complete statutory induction.
- Academy Schools: National Curriculum: Requires academies to teach the National Curriculum following a review.
- Academy Schools: Education Provision for Improving Behaviour: Extends powers to direct pupils off-site to improve behaviour to academies.
- Academies: Power to Secure Performance of Proprietor's Duties: Allows the Secretary of State to direct academies to comply with legal duties.
- Repeal of Duty to Make Academy Order: Changes the duty to issue academy orders for underperforming schools to a discretionary power.
- Academy Schools: Extension of Statutory Pay and Conditions: Extends the statutory pay and conditions framework to academy teachers.
- Co-operation on Admissions and Place Planning: Introduces duties for schools and local authorities to co-operate on admissions and place planning.
- Local Authority Direction Powers: Extends local authorities' powers to direct academies to admit children.
- Functions of Adjudicator in Relation to Admissions Numbers: Allows the Schools Adjudicator to set a school's published admission number.



- Establishment of New Schools: Ends the presumption that new schools should be academies and allows for other types of schools to be proposed.

3 Next steps

- Relevant team in Education and Skills and Children's Services will work to deliver on new duties once the bill passes through parliament and receives royal ascent. There are limited timescales currently to implementation.

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