



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-0064, 12 March 2018

Foster care in England

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Summary

On 14 March 2018 at 9:30am, there will be a Westminster Hall debate on Foster Care. The Member sponsoring the debate is Bill Esterson MP.

This debate pack draws upon the independent review, [Foster Care in England – A Review for the Department for Education by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers](#) (February 2018). The report built on the *National Stocktake on Fostering* – in effect a call for evidence the [results of which](#) were published alongside the review. This paper also uses the Education Select Committee’s report, [Fostering](#) (December 2017), which also focusses on the situation in England. The Department for Education (DfE) has said that its responses to these reports will be published in spring 2018.

The term “fostering” can apply in different child-related contexts – for the purposes of this paper, “fostering” means local authority fostering of a looked after child.

Fostering is a devolved policy area in the UK. This paper will focus on the situation in England.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Background

In January 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) published *Children's social care reform – A vision for change* which stated:

Children's social care is about changing lives. It has the ability not just to improve the circumstances of vulnerable children but to transform them completely.

We want every child in the country, whatever their background, whatever their age, whatever their ethnicity or gender, to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Children's social care services have an essential role to play – whether by keeping children safe from harm, finding the best possible care when children cannot live at home, or creating the conditions that enable children to thrive and achieve. To make that happen, it is essential that everybody working within children's social care has the knowledge and skills to do their jobs well, and the organisational leadership and culture to support and challenge them to keep improving.¹

In the subsequent *Putting children first – Delivering our vision for excellent children's social care*, published in July 2016, the DfE said that “our most vulnerable children are helped and supported by thousands of deeply committed child and family social workers, foster carers, residential care home workers, and a wider workforce made up of personal advisers, therapists, counsellors, social work assistants, family support workers and others. It is only through their skill, expertise and capacity to care that we can truly achieve the change we need for children”.²

Under the heading “Foster placements that work”, the *Putting children first* document stated:

Some local authorities are better than others at matching the right child with the right placement to fully meet their needs, now and for the long term. Early findings from some of the projects that have been funded through the Innovation Programme, such as North Yorkshire's No Wrong Door programme and the Mockingbird programme, have started to show us how stability in a family environment can be achieved even for children with the most challenging backgrounds when foster carers are properly trained and supported, and young people have access to proper respite and therapy. We will use the new national learning infrastructure we are putting in place to learn from the best authorities and providers. In addition, we will undertake a national stocktake of foster care to give us a richer understanding of how placements are made. This will have as its central focus the question of what different foster carers need – skills, expertise, support – in order to meet the diverse needs of today's looked after children.³

¹ Department for Education, [Children's social care reform – A vision for change](#), January 2016, p3

² Department for Education, [Putting children first – Delivering our vision for excellent children's social care](#), July 2016, p14, para 16

³ As above, p62, para 146

1.1 Numbers of looked after children and foster carers

Details of the number of children looked after and the type of placement they are in are routinely published by the DfE:

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER BY PLACEMENT TYPE										
England: Years ending 31 March										
	numbers					% of looked after children				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Foster placements	50,560	50,890	51,590	51,480	53,420	74.3%	73.9%	74.2%	73.1%	73.5%
Placed for adoption	3,620	3,940	3,590	3,160	2,520	5.3%	5.7%	5.2%	4.5%	3.5%
Placement with parents	3,310	3,270	3,570	3,890	4,370	4.9%	4.8%	5.1%	5.5%	6.0%
Living independently	2,270	2,250	2,420	3,080	3,090	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%	4.4%	4.3%
Secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living	6,500	7,030	7,230	7,710	7,890	9.5%	10.2%	10.4%	10.9%	10.9%
Other residential settings	1,020	930	890	880	1,080	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%
Residential schools	590	400	150	140	130	0.9%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Other	190	110	60	110	160	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
All children looked after at 31 March	68,070	68,820	69,500	70,450	72,670	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Please note numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals may not sum exactly due to rounding effects.

Source: [DFE Children Looked After in England 2016/17](#)

The latest figures from Ofsted on approved foster carers in England show that there were 44,320 approved fostering households as at 31 March 2016, representing a -0.7% fall from figure for the previous year (44,625). It is also worth noting that there was a large drop in applications to be foster carers in 2015/16. Applications fell by -32% in 2015/2016, from to 16,920 in 2014/15 down to 11,460 in 2015/16 the previous year – a fall of -32%.⁴

Are there enough foster families?

The 2018 report, [Foster Care in England](#), by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers for the DfE, found that, while at the national level there were sufficient foster carers, in practice at a local level there were shortages due “to geography or the availability of carers who can look after more challenging children”, meaning that sometimes fostering placements were not suitable and broke down.⁵

The report added that “the overwhelming majority of children who need to be fostered are quickly found placements, and at any one time, significant numbers of approved carers do not have a child to look after”, but then immediately went on to say that, at a more practical level i.e. locally (because children who need a foster place cannot readily be moved around the country from friends, family and schools):

We do, however, have geographical shortages and a shortage of the right sort of placement for children who have a range of special

⁴ Ofsted: [Fostering in England 2015/16](#), 28 February 2017

⁵ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p12

needs that will require particular skills and knowledge from a foster carer. Typically, these children are older, part of a sibling group, or have a disability. This results in some children being placed with the foster carers on a temporary basis and subsequently needing to be moved to another, more suitable foster home, sometimes more than once.⁶

The report added that “the scale of this mismatch, which is different around the country, is not known”. Narey and Owers noted that only “limited” data is currently collected and published by Ofsted in this area, but the authors themselves did not seek to fill this lacuna in knowledge, instead concluding that:

our understanding of the availability and skills of foster carers is not good enough. We can't expect to recruit the right number and type of foster carers and in the right parts of the country, when we know so little about the capabilities and location of current carers ... More needs to be done to understand the number and needs of children in care (the demand) and the number of carers and their ability to care for different sorts of children (the supply) and the interplay between the two.⁷

Separately, the consultants LaingBuisson noted in their report *Children's Care and Special Education Services*, published in April 2016, that:

Of the unfilled places offered by foster carers at 31 March 2015, over half (52%) of these were vacant places which are available to be filled, equivalent to an overall vacancy rate of 19% for all fostering. However, the remaining 48% were classed as unavailable, either due to the needs of other children being fostered by the carer(s), or due to the circumstances of the foster carer(s). The unavailable rate at 31 March 2015 was 17% of all places.

[...]

Fill rate (2015) – all sectors: 64.2%;

Vacant rate (2015) – all sectors: 18.8%;

Unavailable rate (2015) – all sectors: 17.0%.

[...]

An average vacancy rate of 19% for all fostering, and a higher vacancy rate of 23.5% for IFAs [Independent Fostering Agencies], may suggest there is currently sufficient capacity of fostering places and foster carers in England. However, industry sources suggest that despite what appear to be high vacancy rates, there continues to be a shortage of suitable places for a significant number of foster children. In this case, therefore, there may be a sufficient amount of demand that is saturated by ‘next best’ placements. In particular, sources cite a shortage of joint places for siblings, convenient places near home, specialist places for disabled children, and suitable places for ethnic minorities. There is evidence of this, although in some cases improvements have been made. For instance, 10.5% of siblings that local authorities wanted to place together were actually placed separately at 31 March 2015, though a clear improvement from 13% a year earlier at 31 March 2014. And 14% of foster placements were 20 miles or more from home at 31 March 2015 (unchanged since 31

⁶ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p49

⁷ As above, pp49–50

March 2010). A lack of suitable fostering places is likely to destabilise placements as unsuitable placements for children are highly likely to be much shorter in length than suitable placements. And research confirms that children who move regularly whilst in care are more likely to have poor social and educational outcomes than those with care stability.⁸

Along similar lines, the Education Select Committee, in its December 2017 report on fostering, highlighted the evidence of the Fostering Network which argued for an additional 7,600 foster families. The Committee argued that “the fostering system requires a surplus of available places for young people needing foster care so that they can be suitably matched with the best and most appropriate foster carer”. In addition, the Committee recommended that the Government should:

establish a national recruitment and awareness campaign for foster carers. This should:

- focus on areas of the country where more carers are particularly needed;
- seek to increase the number of carers from ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds which are currently lacking in representation; and
- target those with specific skills—such as in working with young people with disabilities or special educational needs—in which there is currently a need for greater support.⁹

Narey and Owers, the authors of [Foster Care in England](#), argue that although statutory guidance¹⁰ already requires local authorities to predict demand for children’s social care, local authorities find this difficult in practice.

The authors note that several organisations, such as the Fostering Network, Foster Talk, and some local authorities call for a national register which could contain information useful for recruitment, and allow local authorities to operate a better vacancy management system.¹¹ Creating a national register is recommendation 29 of their report, although Narey and Owers did note that “the Association of Directors of Children’s Services were much more cautious, arguing that a national register was of limited utility when foster placements were invariably sought locally”.¹²

Narey and Owers found other issues with recruitment, including

- a “fragmented market” across 152 local authorities and 295 registered independent fostering agencies (IFAs). The authors conclude that greater regional cooperation could allow better sharing of recruitment budgets and expertise, and that central Government could help by rebranding First4Adoption, the national adoption

⁸ LaingBuisson, *Children’s Care and Special Education Services*, April 2016, pp30–31

⁹ Education Committee, [Fostering](#), HC 340 2017–19, 22 December 2017, p33, para 100 and p36, para 110

¹⁰ See Department for Children, Schools and Families, [Sufficiency – Statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children](#), March 2010, p23, para 4.7.

¹¹ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p50

¹² As above, p80

information service for England, to make it a point of enquiry for fostering.¹³

- the “poaching” of existing foster carers from local authorities to IFAs, usually incentivised with a “golden hello” (i.e. a “large financial inducement”). However, it is unclear how widespread this problem has been.¹⁴

The report said that it had “not seen evidence to justify” the “grave concerns” about retention of foster carers, noting that the Fostering Network’s research has found that a foster carer stays for an average of almost 8 years, and that most leave due to retirement or because they become adopters or special guardians, or a child turns 18 but continues to live with them under a Staying Put arrangement.¹⁵

1.2 Financial support for foster carers

Fees and allowances

The Government sets minimum weekly rates of fostering allowance for foster carers – these vary across the country, and for 2017–18 are:

	Babies	Pre- primary	Primary	11 to 15	16 to 17
London	£144	£147	£165	£187	£219
South East	£138	£142	£158	£179	£211
Rest of England	£125	£128	£141	£161	£188

The rates for 2018–19 will increase be £2–£3 for each of the above; for more information, see the Government’s website on [Help with the cost of fostering](#).

The DfE states that “you could get more if: the child has specific needs; you have certain skills; you make a particularly large commitment to fostering”.¹⁶ Local authorities have discretion to add fees to recognise skills and experiences and time taken by a foster family. As the Fostering Network points out, this varies a great deal between areas: only around half of carers receive these extra fees and the amount offered differs greatly.¹⁷

Concerns

While the review by Narey and Owers felt that compensation for foster carers is adequate,¹⁸ the Education Select Committee’s report on [Fostering](#) argues differently. The authors, using the Fostering Network’s [State of the Nation’s Foster Care](#) report (January 2017), highlight its findings that only 42% of carers felt that their allowances covered the costs of providing

¹³ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p52-3

¹⁴ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p55

¹⁵ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, pp50–56

¹⁶ GOV.UK, [Foster carers](#), webpage accessed on 8 March 2018

¹⁷ Fostering Network, [Fees and allowances](#), webpage accessed on 8 March 2018

¹⁸ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p48

foster care, down from 80% in 2014. This is based on a survey of 2,530 foster carers. The Education Select Committee also point out the Fostering Network's survey of 150 local authorities, which found that 12% are paying below the Government's minimum allowance for at least one age-bracket of child. The Committee therefore argue that the national minimum allowance must be enforced by the Government, and the amount offered needs to be reviewed.

Childcare

At present, foster carers are unable to apply for the "extended entitlement" of 30 hours of free childcare over 38 weeks for the local authority foster children they care for, although the Government has stated that it will amend legislation to remove this bar from September 2018.¹⁹ Further information can be found in section 2 of the Library briefing paper, [Childcare: "30 hours" of free childcare – eligibility, access codes and charges \(England\)](#). Foster carers, like all parents, are able to access the free 15 hours of free childcare over 38 weeks for 3 and 4 year olds.²⁰

Tax support

Foster carers are classed as self-employed for tax purposes.

Under the heading, "Tax-free earnings" on the [Foster carers](#) webpage, the Government notes that:

Tax exemption

There's a fixed tax exemption of up to £10,000 per year (less if for a shorter period) which is shared equally among any foster carers in the same household. This means you don't have to pay tax on the first £10,000 income (after expenses) you make from fostering.

Tax relief

On top of the £10,000 exemption, you also get tax relief for every week (or part week) that a child is in your care. This means you don't have to pay tax on some of your earnings over £10,000.²¹

The amount of tax relief increases from £200 per child aged under 11 to £250 per child aged over 11.

Also, "if you foster, you'll be eligible for National Insurance credits, which counts towards your State Pension".²²

1.3 Employment status

Narey and Owers note that "some foster carers, fostering organisations and trades unions are calling for foster carers to be regarded as workers or

¹⁹ [HC Deb 19 December 2017 c364WH](#)

²⁰ Foster carers are also able to claim it for any 2 year olds in local authority care that they foster [GOV.UK, [Help paying for childcare – Free education and childcare for 2-year-olds](#), webpage accessed on 13 March 2018].

²¹ GOV.UK, [Foster carers](#), webpage accessed on 8 March 2018

²² GOV.UK, [Foster carers](#), webpage accessed on 8 March 2018

employees”. This could better protect them from unfair practices and bring more financial security through sickness benefits. Narey and Owers however also have concerns about the ‘obligations’ and ‘oversight’ that would “impinge drastically on the independence of foster carers, turning their homes into places of work.” Ultimately the authors do not recommend this action.²³

The Education Select Committee, however argue that the Government should reconsider “whether self-employment is the appropriate employment status for foster carers.”²⁴

1.4 Training

There is a wide range of support available to foster carers. The Department for Education has published the [Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Carers](#) (November 2012) which “form part of a foster carer’s induction in the role. They provide a national minimum benchmark that sets out what foster carers should know, understand and be able to do within the first 12-18 months after being approved”.²⁵

Further training is a matter for individual local authorities and IFAs to determine for each foster carer, depending on their experience and the needs of the children they are caring for, for example, although the GOV.UK website notes that “foster carers are reviewed every year by the local council or fostering agency. They can provide training if needed. A supervising social worker will visit you regularly to offer advice and support”.²⁶

The Education Select Committee had concerns about:

- the variable standard, amount and content of training.
- cuts to the non-mandatory training offered to foster carers after the first 12 months of their caring, exacerbated by the financial pressures local authorities find themselves under.

The Committee recommends that the Government should develop high quality on-going training, available nationwide, in conjunction with experts and sector organisations. The Committee also suggested the creation of a national college “to represent foster carers, share knowledge and resources, and bring greater prestige to the role of foster carers.”²⁷

1.5 Local authorities’ performance

When a child is taken into the care of a local authority, several statutory duties apply under the *Children Act 1989* and associated secondary legislation:

²³ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018, p47

²⁴ Education Committee, [Fostering](#), HC 340 2017–19, 22 December 2017, pp21–22, para 60

²⁵ Department for Education, [Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Carers](#), November 2012, p3

²⁶ GOV.UK, [Foster carers – Training and support for foster carers](#), webpage accessed on 8 March 2018

²⁷ Education Committee, [Fostering](#), HC 340 2017–19, 22 December 2017, p27, paras 74–75, p30 para. 88

The 1989 Act and legislation made under it impose a range of specific duties on local authorities towards looked after children and care leavers, for example through the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010. Thus local authorities must assess the child or young persons' needs, prepare and review care plans (for looked after children) and pathway plans (for care leavers) and provide certain types of assistance. There are also some general duties imposed on local authorities in the discharge of their functions in respect of children and young people. Section 22(3) of the 1989 Act requires a local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children it is looking after. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires a local authority in England to make arrangements to promote cooperation with specified partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in their area. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 further requires a local authority in England to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires a local authority to have regard to the need to support and involve children and young people when exercising functions in connection with special educational needs and disability.²⁸

Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of local authorities' children's services; in its most recent [Annual Report 2016/17: Education, children's services and skills](#) (December 2017), the inspectorate noted the following in regard to Single Inspection Framework (SIF) assessments:²⁹

Figure 14: Overall effectiveness of local authorities at their most recent SIF inspection, 31 August 2017



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 30 September 2017.
Source: Ofsted

However, Ofsted noted that “nationally, the overall effectiveness of LAs [local authorities] continues to improve. There is now a considerably higher proportion of LAs (34%) judged as either outstanding or good compared with at the time of the last social care annual report (26%)”.³⁰

Budgetary pressures

Ofsted also noted that:

Recent research has suggested that the LAs with the lowest levels of deprivation get higher judgements. It also suggests that LAs that spend more money are more likely to receive a higher overall effectiveness judgement. We have begun looking at these findings and we found some correlation between the level of deprivation in

²⁸ [Children and Social Work Act 2017–EN](#), p8, para 15

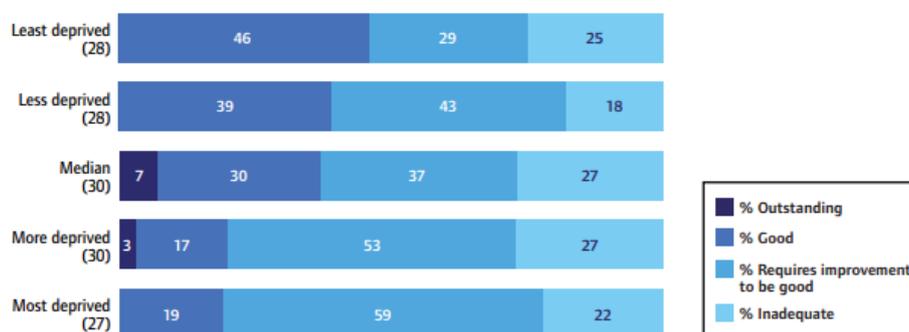
²⁹ Ofsted, [Annual Report 2016/17: Education, children's services and skills](#), HC 618 2017–19, 13 December 2017, p66, figure 14

³⁰ Ofsted, [Annual Report 2016/17: Education, children's services and skills](#), HC 618 2017–19, 13 December 2017, p66

the area and overall effectiveness. However, we found less correlation between spend and overall effectiveness.

This does not mean that the level of funding is unimportant to an LA's performance. Social care demand continues to rise. Numbers of children looked after, for example, are at a record high since the introduction of the 1989 Children Act. Levels of spending on children's services are often achieved through consistently spending more than had been originally planned. It is clear that highly deprived LAs that have high demand and that are facing further reductions to funding will have the greatest challenges to either achieve or maintain good services.

Figure 16: SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgements by level of LA deprivation (quintile)³⁰



1. Based on inspections carried out by 31 August 2017 where the report was published by 4 September 2017.

2. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Source: Ofsted, Department for Communities and Local Government

We found that there was some relationship between the level of deprivation in an LA area and its SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgement. The less deprived LAs were more likely to be judged good and less likely to be judged requires improvement to be good. Perhaps most importantly, there was no strong relationship between deprivation and those judged inadequate.

Our initial research suggests no clear relationship between spend per head and SIF inspection overall effectiveness judgement.

There is little difference in the median level of spending when comparing judgements. Good LAs do not spend more than lower performing authorities.³¹

In its report, [Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018](#) (March 2018), the National Audit Office (NAO) noted that:

Government funding for local authorities has fallen by an estimated 49.1% in real terms from 2010-11 to 2017-18. This equates to a 28.6% real-terms reduction in 'spending power' (government funding and council tax) ... Alongside reductions in funding, local authorities have had to deal with growth in demand for key services, as well as absorbing other cost pressures. Demand has increased for homelessness services and adult and children's social care. From 2010-11 to 2016-17 ... the number of looked-after children grew by 10.9%.

[...]

Local authorities have protected spending on service areas such as adult and children's social care where they have significant statutory

³¹ Ofsted, [Annual Report 2016/17: Education, children's services and skills](#), HC 618 2017-19, 13 December 2017, p70-71, paras 158-162 and figure 16

responsibilities, but the amount they spend on areas that are more discretionary has fallen sharply. Adult and children's social care services have seen a reduction of 3.3% and an increase of 3.2% in real terms, respectively.³²

The report highlighted that “numbers of looked-after children saw the second-largest year-on-year increase in 2016-17 since 2000-01. These authorities identified a range of possible reasons, ranging from reductions in spending on early intervention services to the long-term effects of austerity on deprived communities. However, there was no shared or fully evidenced explanation”.³³

In chapter 2 on service sustainability, the NAO noted that:

Our studies on children in care and children in need of protection have raised concerns about the outcomes for children. Furthermore, the overall effectiveness of 20% of authorities' children's services is rated as being inadequate by Ofsted. The overall effectiveness of a further 46% is rated as requiring improvement. However, neither Ofsted's work nor our previous studies have indicated that these outcomes are directly linked to pressure on local authorities' budgets.

Our case study authorities tended to indicate that pressures in this area were driven by factors such as growing demand and issues with the supply of professional staff or child placements, rather than budget reductions. Furthermore, many aspects of children's social care services are statutory responsibilities, which means that pressure in this area tends to lead to use of reserves or spending reductions in other service areas, rather than a reduction in service.

The Association of Directors of Children's Services and some authorities we talked to have begun to raise concerns about the long-term implications of reductions in discretionary spending on early years provision, such as Sure Start and services for young people. They questioned whether there is a risk that this may be linked to recent increases in demand for children's social care services.³⁴

It is widely acknowledged that local authority children's services are facing significant funding pressures due to overall funding reductions and an increase in demand for services. The [Local Government Association \(LGA\) has predicted](#) that there will be a £2 billion funding shortfall by 2019/20. The [All Party Parliamentary Group for Children \(APPGC\) 2016-17 Inquiry into children's social care services](#) found that 89 % of the directors who participated in a survey (79 out of the 152 directors in England) were finding it harder to fulfil their statutory duties under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.³⁵

³² National Audit Office, [Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018](#), HC 834 2017–19, 8 March 2018, p7, paras 9–10 and 12

³³ National Audit Office, [Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018](#), HC 834 2017–19, 8 March 2018, p19, para 1.17

³⁴ National Audit Office, [Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018](#), HC 834 2017–19, 8 March 2018, pp38 and 40, paras 2.29–2.31

³⁵ [All Party Parliamentary Group for Children \(APPGC\) 2016-17 Inquiry into children's social care services](#), March 2017, p3

Variation in services

The [All Party Parliamentary Group for Children \(APPGC\) 2016-17 Inquiry into children's social care services](#) reported that funding is being prioritised for those who have already suffered abuse or neglect, or those at serious risk, to the **detriment of early intervention services**. As a result, the APPG argues, is more children in care and poor outcomes for families.³⁶

The APPG adds

the Inquiry heard evidence of substantial variations in local policies and in outcomes for children. Perhaps most strikingly, the proportion of children in local authority care ranges from just 22 per 10,000 to 164 per 10,000. Moreover, this and similar variations are only partially explained by differences in deprivation.³⁷

One of the recommendations from the Education Select Committee is greater Government support for early intervention services as part of a capacity review.³⁸ In a Commons debate on children's services on 12 December 2017, the then Minister for Children and Families, Robert Goodwill, acknowledged geographical variations in the provision of children's services:

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We have authorities that have dramatically reduced the number of children being taken into care by making early interventions. That saves money, makes the local authority more cost effective and is the sort of innovation that we want to spread around the country, from the good or outstanding authorities to the other authorities that are, unfortunately, letting down too many children and not spending the hard-earned taxpayers' money deployed for their use as effectively as they might. We need to improve the standard of children's social care in so many authorities where they are not delivering as well as elsewhere.³⁹

Future developments – corporate parenting principles

Looking ahead, in the *Children and Social Work Act 2017*, section 1 placed the concept of specified “corporate parenting principles” on to the statute book for the first time.

Section 1 states that:

A local authority in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people mentioned in subsection (2), have regard to the need—

- a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;

³⁶ [All Party Parliamentary Group for Children \(APPGC\) 2016-17 Inquiry into children's social care services](#), March 2017, p3

³⁷ [All Party Parliamentary Group for Children \(APPGC\) 2016-17 Inquiry into children's social care services](#), March 2017, p2

³⁸ Education Committee, [Fostering](#), HC 340 2017–19, 22 December 2017, p34, para. 102

³⁹ [HC Deb 12 December 2017 c116WH](#)

- b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Government notes that “local authorities in England must have regard to [the principles] whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked after children, relevant children and former relevant children (otherwise known as looked after children and care leavers)”, and that “the principles are applicable to all local authorities in England, whether or not they are (or were) the local authority responsible for the looked after the child or the care leaver”.⁴⁰

The duty is expected to come into force on 1 April 2018⁴¹ – the Government issued a consultation on draft regulations in October 2017,⁴² and published its response in February 2018.⁴³

1.6 Outcomes for looked after children

The DfE routinely publish details of educational outcomes for looked after children. A summary of the latest available data is shown below, with comparison figures for non-looked after children also shown.

⁴⁰ [Children and Social Work Act 2017–EN](#), p14, para 47

⁴¹ [PQ HL1989 26 October 2017](#)

⁴² Department for Education, [Corporate Parenting Principles; Local Offer; and extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25 – Government consultation](#), 16 October 2017

⁴³ Department for Education, [Guidance on the corporate parenting principles, the local offer and extending Personal Adviser \(PA\) support to all care leavers to age 25 – Government consultation response](#), 26 February 2018, pp4 and 5–7

EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN 2016		
England: children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months		
	Looked after children	Non looked after children
Year 2		
Number eligible to sit Key Stage 1 tasks and tests	1,820	640,210
<i>Percentage reaching expected standard in:</i>		
Reading	50%	74%
Writing	37%	66%
Mathematics	46%	73%
Science	58%	82%
Year 6		
Number eligible to sit Key Stage 2 tests	2,450	558,230
<i>Percentage reaching expected standard in:</i>		
Reading	41%	66%
Writing (taught assessed)	46%	74%
Mathematics	41%	70%
Grammar, punctuation and spelling	44%	73%
Reading, writing and mathematics	25%	54%
Year 11		
Number eligible to sit GCSEs	4,890	604,480
<i>Percentage who attained at least:</i>		
A* - C in English & Mathematics	18%	59%
5+ A* - C GCSEs or equivalent inc. English and Mathematics	14%	53%

[Source: DFE, Outcomes looked after by Local Authorities in England](#)

Details of the offending behaviour of looked after children used to be published by the DfE but data collection ceased in 2015. The most recent available figures for the years ending 2013 and 2014 are shown below.

OFFENDING BY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN						
England: Children who had been looked after continuously for at least twelve months						
	As at 31 March 2013			As at 31 March 2014		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Looked after children aged 10-17 years	16,800	13,040	29,840	17,160	13,510	30,660
Number convicted or subject to a final warning/reprimand	1,300	530	1,830	1,260	450	1,710
% looked after children aged 10-17	7.7%	4.1%	6.1%	7.3%	3.3%	5.6%
% all children aged 10 to 17	1.9%	0.4%	0.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a

[Source: DFE, Outcomes looked after by Local Authorities in England 2014/15](#)

A report by the Prison Reform Trust and the National Children's Bureau found that in 2010/11 just over a quarter (27%) of 15-18 year olds boys in prison and over half (55%) of girls of the same age had been in care at some point before being sentenced to custody.⁴⁴

The NAO report [Care leavers' transitions to adulthood](#) (July 2015) concluded that the system for supporting young people leaving foster or residential care in England was not working effectively. The report explores the connection to homelessness, criminal behaviour, teenage pregnancy, mental health, educational attainment and employment.

The Government's strategy [Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#) (July 2016) also analyses outcomes for care leavers. The authors stress that these outcomes are impacted greatly by experiences both before and during care, and that the characteristics more common amongst looked after children (for instance, Special Educational needs and emotional health concerns) make it difficult to compare to children who have not been looked after by the State. The Government also emphasises that care leavers are forced to be independent at a much earlier age than average, without familial support. Nonetheless, the authors write,

[...] the fact remains that the data on care leavers' outcomes is stark and there has been limited improvement over time.

[...] In the year ending March 2015, 39% of 19-21 year-old care leavers were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – an increase of 1 percentage point compared to the previous year. Of these, over a third were NEET due to either a disability, or because they were a young parent. Six percent of 19-21 year-old care leavers were in Higher Education; and a further 18% were in other types of education. Twenty-three per cent were in employment or training, an increase of 3 percentage points on the previous year.

There is no national data that reports on care leavers' longer term outcomes, but research consistently shows that care leavers are over-represented in studies on people in custody, homelessness and other negative outcomes, although those studies normally include people of all ages and so are not focused on the current cohort of care leavers.⁴⁵

The Narey and Owers independent review is more positive, arguing that "fostering is a success story" which can lead to better outcomes **when compared to children in residential care or children 'in need' but living in their family home.**⁴⁶

⁴⁴ [Care - a Stepping Stone to Custody?](#) Prison Reform Trust, 2011

⁴⁵ HM Government, [Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#), July 2016, paras 1.22-1.27

⁴⁶ Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, [Foster Care in England](#), February 2018,

Government strategy

The Government's strategy [Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#) (July 2016) sets out the 'three key ways' to 'drive improvements in leaving care services':

Firstly, [the strategy] sets out how we will use the Innovation Programme to rethink how services are delivered and what support is provided, with a strong focus on finding new and better ways of helping care leavers develop the social networks that will sustain them not just in the years immediately after leaving care, but throughout their lives. We will also support new ways of delivering services, for example through Trusts, which have a clear and specific focus on improving care leavers' life chances.

Secondly, it sets out how we will strengthen the culture of corporate parenting, both locally – through our planned legislative measures – and through changes to central government policies, so that they better respond to care leavers' unique status and circumstances.

And finally, it sets out how we will support and challenge local areas, so that all deliver to the standards of the best.⁴⁷

More recently, a joint Department of Health and Department for Education Expert Working Group published its proposals for improving the mental health of looked after children and care leavers - [Improving mental health support for our children and young people](#) (November 2017).⁴⁸

Since June 2014, local authorities in England have been under a duty to facilitate, monitor and support fostered young people to stay in foster placements until they reach the age of 21.⁴⁹ The *Children and Social Work Act 2017* has introduced the principles of corporate parenting into law: see section 1.5 (pp12-13) for more details – when in force, this duty will apply to all children who have been looked after up to the age of 25.

The 2017 Act has also extended the period of time that a local authority must provide a personal advisor (PA) to a care leaver. Previously, care leavers had this right to the age of 21, subject to extension up to 25 years of age if they were in education or training. From 1 April 2018, all care leavers will be entitled to a PA until the age of 25. For more information, see the Government's [statutory guidance](#).⁵⁰

On 27 February 2018, [the Children and Families Minister announced](#) three new projects intended to support care leavers into education, employment or training.⁵¹

⁴⁷ HM Government, [Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#), July 2016, Ministerial Foreword

⁴⁸ SCIE, [Improving mental health support for our children and young people: Expert Working Group final report](#), November 2017

⁴⁹ For more details see [DfE, DWP and HMRC Guidance on "Staying Put"](#).

⁵⁰ [Extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25](#), DfE, February 2018

⁵¹ ['Minister announces improved support for care leavers'](#), *DfE Press Release*, 27 February 2018

2. Press Articles

[Government's fostering stocktake is a huge opportunity wasted](#), *Guardian*, 5 March 2018

- Kevin William, the chief executive of the Fostering Network, writes in the *Guardian*. He argues that the Government's recent report on [Foster care in England](#) does not have a 'vision' for foster care, and instead sees it as a 'stepping stone' to adoption or special guardianship orders. He also believes that the reforms proposed will only make minor changes to the sector which is experiencing many issues. Finally he criticises the evidence base for some of the report's claims.

[Fostering stocktake: six major recommendations for change](#), *Children and Young People Now*, 27 February 2018

- An overview of the recommendations, sector comment and additional comment from the co-author of the Government's independent report, Mark Owers.

[Fostering stocktake proposals 'place vulnerable children at risk'](#), *Children and Young People Now*, 13 February 2018

- Criticism of the suggestion, in the 2018 independent review of fostering, that local authorities should have discretion over whether to appoint an independent reviewing officer (IRO).

[The fostering stocktake brings back dangerous ideas from the 'exemption clause'](#), *Community Care*, 9 February 2018

- An article highlighting concerns about certain 'opt-outs' that the independent review recommends, including the appointment of IROs.

[Let foster parents hug and kiss children, report urges](#), *Times*, 6 February 2018

- An article about The Department for Education's report, [Foster care in England](#). It picks up on the comment that a foster carer being physically affectionate with their looked after children is seemingly frowned upon.
- This was also picked up in the *Telegraph*. [See Foster parents are 'scared to hug their children in case they're accused of sexual abuse', Government report finds](#).

[Foster care review criticised for 'lacking ambition and vision'](#), *Children and Young People Now*, 6 February 2018

[Fostering review: Treat carers as the experts they are](#), *Guardian*, 6 February 2018

- This article comments on the Government's report, [Foster care in England](#), in particular how the authors of the report have found in general a positive picture of the value of foster care. The article calls the recommendations realistic and affordable; a beneficial "simple call for carers to be well-supported".

[Private foster care agencies increasing cost of finding children homes](#), *Guardian*, 30 January 2018

- Local authorities have warned that independent foster agencies (IFAs) attract foster carers with greater salaries, and then charge local authorities, who struggle to recruit foster carers, much more to use their services.
- The article also outlines a Guardian investigation into the finances of several IFAs and concerns about the growing size of some companies. The Guardian writes more about the industry in its article, [Why do we let greedy financiers profit from the pain of foster children?](#)

[Foster children face a lottery of care in a system that is under pressure](#), *Telegraph*, 22 December 2017

- Written by Robert Halfon MP, the chair of the Education Select Committee, regarding their report into [Fostering](#).

[MPs call for establishment of national fostering college](#), *Children and Young People Now*, 22 December 2017

- An article about the Education Select Committee's report in [Fostering](#).

[Free childcare to be extended to foster carers](#), *Children and Young People Now*, 20 December 2017

[Foster children to be entitled to same amount of free childcare as others](#), *Guardian*, 19 December 2017

[Foster carers should not need worker status to get support and protection](#), *Guardian*, 30 November 2017

- An article about some recent calls for foster carers to get more 'workers' rights'. The author argues against using 'contracts and codified processes' which may get in the way of a child's care.

[Only 6% of care leavers go to university. They deserve better chances](#), *Guardian*, 7 November 2017

- An article about some of the educational difficulties cared-for children face.

[Care leavers criticise lack of youth input in fostering stocktake](#), Children and Young People Now, 7 November 2017

- In the Education Select Committee hearing, the upcoming Government review of the fostering system is criticised for a lack of input from young people.

[The foster care system faces a looming crisis](#), *Guardian*, 6 November 2017

- An article arguing that there is a diminishing number of foster carers, despite more and more children going into care.

[Majority of foster carers earn less than living wage](#), Children and Young People Now, 20 October 2017

[Call for national foster care recruitment drive](#), Children and Young People Now, 18 October 2017

[Council foster carer launches bid to win employment rights](#), *Times*, 9 October 2017

- This story is also picked up by [Community Care](#).

[Children in care numbers rise at fastest rate in five years](#), Children and Young People Now, September 2017

[Creed and colour don't matter: just take in a child and love it](#), *Times*, 3 September 2017

- Written after the case of a “culturally mismatched’ fostering of a Christian girl by a Muslim household”, this article argues that the main problem is the lack of appropriate carers.

[For foster carers, the professional and personal are not mutually exclusive](#), Community Care, 26 July 2017

- An article written by the Fostering Network, in favour of seeing foster carers as professionals.

[We need to find the balance between ‘professional’ and ‘traditional’ foster care](#), Community Care, 20 July 2017

[Children’s services directors wary of moves to ‘professionalise’ foster carers](#), Community Care, 14 July 2017

- An article about the debate surrounding whether foster carers should be treated as ‘professionals’

[Councils criticised over 'self-serving' in-house fostering policy](#), Children and Young People Now, 21 June 2017

- It is reported that councils preferring to foster children 'in-house' rather than use independent fosters even if they would be a better match.

[We need urgent action to find more foster carers](#), *Times*, 1 May 2017

- An article arguing for greater incentives, such as an improved fee, to recruit foster carers.

[MP raises concerns over foster care monopolies](#), Children and Young People Now, 7 March 2017

[Foster agencies profit by poaching carers](#), *Times*, 14 February 2017

- The results from Freedom of Information requests reveal that on average local authorities spent £17,365 a year on each in-house foster care and £42,683 for agency foster placements.

[Major £400m fostering services merger faces probe](#), Children and Young People Now, 7 February 2017

[Foster carers vote to unionise in fight for pay and working rights](#), *Guardian*, 20 September 2016

[Directors urge crackdown on 'immoral' profiteering from fostering](#), *Community Care*, 8 July 2016

[Mental health tests for children in care](#), *Times*, 28 April 2016

- An article about the Education Select Committee's report [Mental health and well-being of looked-after children](#) (April 2016).

[A fostering leadership board is needed to tackle issues in the sector](#), *Community Care*, 6 January 2016

3. Press releases and blogs

[TACT's response to the independent review of foster care in England](#), ATC, 2018

[Reaction to Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers' review of fostering for the Department for Education](#), Action for Children, February 2018

[The Fostering Network welcomes education committee report](#), Fostering Network, December 2017

[Where now for leaving care?](#) TACT, 21 June 2017

[Charity calls for 7,000 more foster families, particularly for teens and siblings](#), Fostering Network, May 2017

[TACT renews call for ban on firms in England making profits from fostering](#), TACT, February 2017

[UK's fostering system under 'unsustainable strain', top fostering charity warns](#), Fostering Network, January 2017

4. Parliamentary material

4.1 Statements

Statement by the chair of the Education Select Committee, Robert Halfon, regarding their report on [Fostering](#) (December 2017):

I am delighted to make this short statement about our Committee's report. Social justice is one of the primary objectives of the Education Committee. It is vital that young people in foster care are able to climb the educational ladder of opportunity like anybody else. I begin by paying tribute to the previous Committee of the 2015 Parliament and particularly to its Chair, the former Member for Stroud. I also thank the officers of the Education Committee, who have done a huge amount of work on this report.

In our final evidence session, we heard moving testimony from young people with experience of foster care. Members present had dry throats and some had tears in their eyes. We also heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Scarborough and Whitby (Mr Goodwill), the former Minister for Children and Families, for whom I have huge respect; he was willing to share his evidence session with the young people, which created an important and unique session.

In our report, we wrote of the importance of valuing the three pillars of fostering: valuing young people, valuing foster carers and valuing the care system itself. The fact is that the foster care system in England is under significant pressure. That must be of national concern, given that it is often the most vulnerable young people in our society who are being failed by a care system that does not meet their needs.

The number of looked-after children has risen by 7% since 2013. I welcome the fact that the Government have recognised that pressure and commissioned their own review of fostering by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers. I understand that that review is with Ministers at the moment and will be considered alongside the recommendations made by our Committee.

Let us begin with valuing young people. Foster children face a lottery of care, frequent placements, and the possibility of being separated from their siblings. We heard moving evidence from young people who spoke about the number of placements they experienced. One young person in foster care had been through eight placements in four years. Another spoke about having

“moved six times in less than no time”,

while another had lived in thirteen different foster placements and two children's homes in five years. Such frequency of placement change can only be damaging to the children's wellbeing, development and future prospects. The Government must redouble every effort to ensure that young people and children do not face the prospect of such a dizzying number of placements.

What truly shocked every member of the Committee was that some foster children move placements with very short notice, little to no information, and often without any advocacy rights at all. It is clear that the guidelines intended to tackle these issues are being applied inconsistently at best and inhumanely at worst.

To give another example, we heard about young people in foster care being separated from their siblings. Figures suggest that 70% of siblings are not placed together when one is already in care. A 17-year-old, who had been moved away from her siblings, told us that

“to lose a bond with your own siblings is sad, because you’re by yourself in the world and your siblings are practically your best friends and now you’re losing them—you’ve lost your parents and then your siblings, and it’s like your whole world has crashed down really quite quickly.”

Young people must be placed with siblings wherever it is possible and appropriate. If it is not, social workers and others have to make a greater effort to facilitate regular and meaningful contact. I urge the new Minister with responsibility for children to ensure consistency and guarantees of advocacy for all foster children. Ofsted says that one in three children do not even receive any information on their placement, which is unacceptable.

The second chapter of our report focuses on valuing foster carers. They play an important role in our society—they provide remarkable care in difficult circumstances—but are often under-appreciated, undermined and undervalued. The Fostering Network estimates that there is a deficit of 7,600 foster carers. The foster carer population is disproportionately female and ever ageing. Too often they have to wade through a treacle of bureaucracy, and they are not adequately supported financially or professionally in the vital work they do. Their status is unclear in terms of employment—but not, sadly, with the Inland Revenue, which treats them as if they were employed.

In our report, we press the Government to ensure that all foster carers are paid the national minimum allowance. The Fostering Network found that 12% of local authority fostering services were paying below the national minimum allowance for at least one age bracket, that 47% had frozen allowances and that five had reduced rates compared with 2016-17. Ministers need to make sure that the allowance matches rises in living costs and allows carers to meet the needs of those they are caring for. Carers must also benefit from legal protection against the increasing number of malicious and unfounded allegations.

The final section of the report concerns valuing care. We recommend that the Department for Education establish a national college to work towards improving working conditions for carers, provide a resource for their training and support and give them a national voice and representation. Initially, we envisage not a building but a virtual college on the internet. We believe there is value in a mechanism for greater sharing of best practice and increasing professionalism and for creating a proper identity for all foster carers across our country. We believe that a national recruitment and awareness campaign, initiated by the Department, could help to improve capacity in the system.

For too many children and young people, the experience of care is of something done to them, not with them. There has to be greater involvement of foster children and better information for them on their placements, and a consistency of practice to ensure that all young people can benefit from an appropriate and positive experience of foster care. The Government listened to the strong representations from Committee members on extending the extra 15 hours a week childcare entitlement to children in foster care, and I

welcome the moves that have been made on that. In this new year, the Committee hopes that Ministers will consider the recommendations in our report and show that we truly value foster children and foster care.

11 Jan 2018 | Select Committee statements | House of Commons | House of Commons chamber | 634 cc498-502

4.2 Debates

[Childcare for Fostered Children](#)

Motion that this House has considered childcare for fostered children. Agreed to on question. Sitting adjourned without Question put.

19 Dec 2017 | Debates | House of Commons | 633 cc353-368WH

[Young Care Leavers](#)

Lords question for short debate on what plans they have to help young care leavers not able to "stay put" in foster care to make a successful transition to independence.

12 Mar 2015 | Questions for short debate | House of Lords | 760 cc792-812

4.3 Parliamentary questions (PQs)

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 129132)

Asked by: Smith, Jeff | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Government plans to respond to the recommendations of the report on the National Fostering Stocktake, published in February 2018.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The government is currently considering the recommendations of the National Fostering Stocktake report, alongside those made by the Education Select Committee. Our response to both reports will be published in spring 2018.

27 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 128391)

Asked by: Jones, Graham P | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to include fostering as a recognised professional occupation.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The government's independent review into foster care and the Education Select Committee inquiry considered the status of foster parents, including whether foster parents should be considered as professionals or employees. The department is carefully considering the recommendations of both reports and the government response

will be published in spring this year. The Education Select Committee report is available here:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/inquiry1/>.

The independent review of foster care is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/50679320/Foster_Care_in_England_Review.pdf.

27 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 128389)

Asked by: Cadbury, Ruth | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of conducting a national survey of fostering households.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Local authorities have a duty to ensure there are enough foster parents to meet the diverse needs of the children they look after. However, we are aware that the right type of foster care may not always be available at the time or in the area it is needed.

The government's independent review into foster care and the Education Select Committee considered sufficiency planning and commissioning practices as well as the recruitment and retention of foster parents. The department will be carefully considering the recommendations from both reports. The government response will be published this spring.

27 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 128294)

Asked by: Morris, Anne Marie | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of peer-to-peer support groups for foster carers.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The Education Select Committee and the government's independent review into foster care considered the support foster carers receive, including peer support. The department is carefully considering the recommendations and the government response will be published in spring this year. The independent review is available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/50679320/Foster_Care_in_England_Review.pdf.

In addition, the department funds projects to support foster families through the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme. This includes the Mockingbird Family Model. One of that project's aims is to increase rates of foster parent recruitment and retention, which

The 'Mockingbird Model' is a system where foster carers sit within a hub of fellow carers and professionals. See the explanation on the [Fostering Network](#) and this article by [Children and Young People Now](#) (14 March 2017)

includes providing peer support to foster parents. The project will be subject to rigorous independent evaluation and will inform the evidence base of what works in children's social care.

27 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 128156)

Asked by: Cadbury, Ruth | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a national fostering college; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The Department for Education is currently considering the recommendation made by the Education Select Committee to establish a national college for foster carers. We are considering these recommendations alongside those of the government's independent review of fostering. Our formal response to both reports will be published in spring 2018.

27 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Payments](#) (PQ 126382)

Asked by: De Cordova, Marsha | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the use of retainer fees in increasing foster carer retention.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

Fostering is a challenging role that requires skill and dedication from those who foster. Recruiting and retaining foster parents with the skills, motivation and resilience to meet the diverse needs of the children in their care is crucial.

Whilst the department has not assessed the use of retainer fees specifically in increasing retention, the National Fostering Stocktake, an independent review of the fostering system in England, considered the recruitment and retention of foster parents. The department will carefully consider any recommendations made by the review and by the Education Select Committee. The government's response will be published this spring.

12 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Recruitment](#) (PQ126381)

Asked by: De Cordova, Marsha | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to increase the recruitment of foster carers with skills in working with young people with disabilities or special educational needs.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

Local authorities have a duty to ensure they have sufficient placements that meet the needs of their looked after children and the department is committed to ensuring foster parents have the support and skills they need to meet the diverse needs of the children in their care, including children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs.

The National Fostering Stocktake, an independent review of the fostering system in England, has now concluded. It considered the recruitment and retention of foster parents, including the support they receive. The department will carefully consider any recommendations made by the review and by the Education Select Committee. The government's response will be published this spring.

12 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Minority Groups](#) (PQ 126380)

Asked by: De Cordova, Marsha | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to increase the number of foster carers from minority communities.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The cultural, ethnic, linguistic or religious background is among a number of considerations that a local authority must consider when placing a child. The priority is that the child is safe and with a carer who is able to meet their individual needs. Local authorities have a duty to ensure they have sufficient placements that meet the needs of their looked after children.

The National Fostering Stocktake, an independent review of the fostering system in England, has now concluded. It considered the recruitment and retention of foster parents. The department will carefully consider any recommendations made by the review and by the Education Select Committee. The government's response will be published this spring.

12 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 125639)

Asked by: Wollaston, Dr Sarah | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been fostered in England in each of the last five years.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The numbers of children looked after in foster placements at any time during the year ending 31 March in each of the last five years were published in Table B1, in the statistical release Children looked after in England including adoption: 2016 to 2017 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>.

The numbers of children, who ceased to be looked after because of a special guardianship order during the year ending 31 March in each of the last five years, are shown in the attached table.

07 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 125311)

Asked by: Sheerman, Mr Barry | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps are being taken to improve consistency in foster care payments by area.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The National Minimum Standards for fostering services (NMS) are clear that every foster parent should receive an allowance that covers the full cost of caring for a child. The government recommends a minimum allowance that fostering service providers should pay to their foster parents each week to cover the costs involved in looking after a child or young person. It is set out as a benchmark standard in the NMS and offers some consistency in the allowances paid by local authorities.

Whilst it is for local authorities to decide the rate paid to foster parents in their area, our strong expectation is that foster parents with a child in placement will be paid at least the national minimum allowance. We know a number of fostering service providers already base their fostering allowances on rates that are higher than those recommended by the government.

The National Fostering Stocktake, an independent review of the fostering system in England, has now concluded. The department will carefully consider any recommendations made by the review and the Education Select Committee on payments to foster parents. The government response will be published in spring 2018.

06 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 125309)

Asked by: Sheerman, Mr Barry | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that sibling groups in the foster system are placed together.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The statutory framework is clear that local authorities must ensure a placement enables a child to live with their sibling, if the sibling is also looked after. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to place sibling groups together. The child's – or children's - best interests are paramount. Where siblings cannot be placed together, contact should be actively encouraged and facilitated unless this goes against the child's best interest.

Every child's care plan must contain information about the arrangements for promoting and maintaining contact with siblings who are not placed together.

06 Feb 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Finance](#) (PQ 124554)

Asked by: Nandy, Lisa | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the national minimum fostering allowance to cover young people in staying put arrangements.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Foster carers and those providing Staying Put arrangements play a vital role in supporting some of our most vulnerable children and young people. It is right that they receive the support they need to meet the needs of those they care for, including financial support.

There has been no assessment of the adequacy of National Minimum Allowances for foster carers or whether it would be appropriate to set minimum allowances for those providing Staying Put arrangements.

However, the National Fostering Stocktake, an independent review of the fostering system in England, has now concluded. I will carefully consider any recommendations made by the review and the Education Select Committee on payments to foster carers and Staying Put carers. The government response will be published in spring 2018.

'Staying Put' arrangements are where a fostered child continues to live with their foster carers after their 18th birthday. For more information, see the [DfE, DWP and HMRC Guidance on "Staying Put"](#).

31 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Finance](#) (PQ 124553)

Asked by: Nandy, Lisa | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has assessed the adequacy of National Minimum Fostering Allowance rates since their introduction in 2007.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Foster carers and those providing Staying Put arrangements play a vital role in supporting some of our most vulnerable children and young people. It is right that they receive the support they need to meet the needs of those they care for, including financial support.

There has been no assessment of the adequacy of National Minimum Allowances for foster carers or whether it would be appropriate to set minimum allowances for those providing Staying Put arrangements.

However, the National Fostering Stocktake, an independent review of the fostering system in England, has now concluded. I will carefully consider any recommendations made by the review and the Education Select Committee on payments to foster carers and

Staying Put carers. The government response will be published in spring 2018.

31 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 124551)

Asked by: Nandy, Lisa | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many young people were (a) eligible to and (b) did remain with a foster carer in a staying put arrangement in 2016-17.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The number of care leavers who were eligible for, and receiving care leaver support in, a staying put arrangement with a former foster carer was published in table F2 for 19 and 20 year olds. This is published in table F4 for 18 year olds, in the statistical release 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2016 to 2017' at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>.

31 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 124549)

Asked by: Nandy, Lisa | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the number of young people who are able to remain living with their foster carer in a staying put arrangement.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Department for Education

The cross-government care leaver strategy 'Keep on Caring' (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/535899/Care-Leaver-Strategy.pdf), which was published in July 2016, reiterated our commitment to Staying Put. It made clear that we want to maximise the number of eligible care leavers who take up the option to Stay Put. This includes continuing to provide funding to local authorities to implement Staying Put, totalling £92.12 million over the period 2016/17 to 2019-20. Through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the government introduced a requirement for local authorities to publish a 'Local Offer' for care leavers, which should set out care leavers' legal entitlements, and which should include the local authority's policy on Staying Put.

31 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Children in Care](#) (PQ 124531)

Asked by: Coffey, Ann | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Children looked after in England including adoption: 2016 to 2017 statistics published in September 2017, what assessment he has

made of the reasons for the number of looked-after children who were removed from their placement at the request of their carer due to their behaviour rose from 940 to 1,370 between March 2016 and March 2017.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Information on the reasons looked after children were removed from their placements is published as experimental statistics in the statistical first release '*Children looked after in England including adoption*'. This information was collected for the first time in 2016 and so comparisons between years should be treated with caution.

The information shows that in 2016, 940 placements in secure units, children's homes and semi-independent living accommodation were identified as changing because the carer requested the change due to the child's behaviour. In 2017, this figure was 1,370 but in the same year we saw a drop in placements of that type which ended due to "other" reasons. Feedback from local authorities has identified improved recording of the reasons for placement changes so that more placements are coded under their correct reason rather than "other". The evidence does not necessarily point to a real increase in the number of placements ending either at the request of the carer due to the child's behaviour or at the request of the child.

31 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 124432)

Asked by: McCabe, Steve | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December 2017 to Question 117980, on foster care, how many organisations have adopted the foster-family-friendly employer policy since its inception.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

In April 2014, the department became the government's first foster-family-friendly employer, as we believe it is right that staff have extra support in balancing their work and caring responsibilities. Other government departments, including the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, have since followed the Department for Education's lead and introduced a similar policy.

We do not collect data on which organisations sign up to this commitment, but there is a list of foster-family-friendly employers on pages 21-23 of the 'Combining Fostering and Other Work' report (November 2014, The Fostering Network and the Department for Education).

To ensure even more support for foster carers, the government has recently committed to extending the additional 15 hours childcare allowance to foster carers taking on employment outside of the home by September 2018.

31 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Finance](#) (PQ 124860)

Asked by: Berger, Luciana | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, in reference to the staying put initiative launched in 2013, whether his Department plans to raise the payment for HS236 foster carers who are looking after adults in their care.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |

Department: Department for Education

Staying Put arrangements play a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable young people in society, allowing them to enjoy continuity in their care arrangements, and adopt a more gradual transition to adulthood and independence. It is therefore right that foster carers receive the support that they need, including financial support, to help them meet the needs of those that they care for. In Staying Put arrangements, the amount paid to foster carers is determined locally, by the carer's local authority or fostering agency.

29 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Children: Social Services](#) (PQ 122781)

Asked by: Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what duty is placed on inspectors under the Single Inspection Framework for Local Authority Children's Services to (a) observe social workers in practice and (b) speak with (i) children, (ii) parents and (iii) carers inclusive of foster carers.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |

Department: Department for Education

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you and a copy of her reply will be placed in the libraries of the House.

This response from Ofsted has not yet been received.

18 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Adoption and Foster Care](#) (PQ 121645)

Asked by: Harman, Ms Harriet | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support cross-cultural fostering and adoptive placements.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | **Party:** Conservative Party |

Department: Department for Education

The government is committed to encouraging stable families and individuals from all cultural backgrounds to foster or adopt. Cultural and ethnic background is one of a number of considerations that a local authority must consider when placing a child.

The Children Act 1989 and underpinning regulations state that a child can be placed with a carer that does not share their culture, religion, language or ethnicity as long as that placement is appropriate and able to meet the needs of the child. Children should be cared for in a

way that recognises and respects their identity and carers should be given the training and support they need to fully support that child.

Since 2014, adoption agencies are no longer required to search for an ethnic match between potential adopters and children. The National Fostering Stocktake has explored a range of issues, including the recruitment and retention of foster carers, and making good placement decisions. The department plans to publish its report shortly.

17 Jan 2018 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 118821)

Asked by: Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the number of independent fostering agencies in England.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

This is a matter for Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, who will write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

19 Dec 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 117980)

Asked by: McCabe, Steve | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what she is doing to remove barriers for people who want to combine work outside the home with fostering.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

Foster carers play a vital role in supporting some of our most vulnerable children and it is right that they receive the support they need to meet the needs of the children they look after.

We have introduced the foster-family-friendly employer policy, with the Department for Education leading by example in ensuring support and flexibility for its employees who foster. The National Fostering Stocktake, a comprehensive review of the fostering system, is also underway. The Stocktake is looking at a wide range of issues including the recruitment and retention of foster carers and the support foster carers receive. The reviewers will report to my hon. Friend the Minister for Children and Families with recommendations at the end of the year. Foster carers are also able to access the universal 15 hours of free childcare.

15 Dec 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Children: Day Care](#) (PQ 117978)

Asked by: McCabe, Steve | **Party:** Labour Party

Grouped with PQs 118811 and 118820, the letter from Ofsted can be found on the [deposited papers database](#).

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make it her policy to increase the national minimum fostering allowance to take into account the cost of childcare.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

Foster carers play a vital role in supporting some of our most vulnerable children. It is right that foster carers receive the support they need to meet the needs of the children they look after. At present, foster carers are able to access the universal 15 hours of free childcare.

15 Dec 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care: Greater London](#) (PQ HL3703)

Asked by: Lord Laming | **Party:** Crossbench

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to take any action to reduce the number of children in the care of local authorities in London being placed in foster homes in Kent; and if so, what.

Answering member: Lord Agnew of Oulton | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Education

The government is clear that the needs of the child are paramount when making decisions about the right care placement. Local councils have a statutory duty to consider the right placement for each child and take into account a number of factors, one of which is placement area. Sometimes circumstances make it the right decision for a local council to identify a placement outside of the child's local area, for example when a child is at risk from child sexual exploitation, trafficking or gang violence or when they need very specialist care.

Out of area placements require approval from the Director of Children's Services, and Ofsted will challenge local councils where they believe poor out of area placements are being made.

The National Fostering Stocktake is underway. It is a comprehensive review of fostering in England. It will help us better understand the current provision and challenges in the system. It is looking at a wide range of issues including commissioning of placements and the recruitment, retention and matching of foster carers. The reviewers will report to ministers with recommendations at the end of the year.

13 Dec 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 113556)

Asked by: Gwynne, Andrew | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many concurrent planning arrangements for children have been authorised in each of the last five years, for each local authority.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

The department does not collect data separately on the number of concurrent planning arrangements for looked after children. These

are combined in the department's data collection with fostering for adoption placements. The number of concurrent planning or fostering for adoption placements for looked after children at 31 March of the last three years is given in the attached table. This information was collected for the first time in 2015 and so earlier data is not available. Local council level information has not been provided to prevent disclosure of small numbers. This information is taken from Table A2 of the statistical release 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2016 to 2017' at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2016-to-2017>.

24 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 113040)

Asked by: Turley, Anna | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate she has made of the cost to local authorities in England of using independent fostering agencies in each of the last five years.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

Local council expenditure on independent (including private and voluntary) fostering service providers has been between 45 and 47 per cent of the total expenditure on fostering services between 2011 and 2016. This information can be found in the attached table. The 2016-17 data will be published in December.

22 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Carers](#): Oral questions

Questions to the Minister for Children and Families (Mr Robert Goodwill) concerning the recruitment and support of foster carers.

06 Nov 2017, 630 cc1171-2

[Mothers: Custodial Treatment](#) (PQ 110070)

Asked by: Green, Kate | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what safeguards her Department has put in place to ensure that children whose mothers are serving short-term custodial sentences are not removed from their family home and placed in foster care.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

This department has not made any assessment of the effect of short-term custodial sentences on children separated from their mothers. However, the government has funded a contract worth over £1.4 million for Barnardo's to operate the *i-HOP* service to share evidence on practice and advise commissioners and practitioners on the options available to support the families of offenders.

The law is clear that children are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary. The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* is clear that where a child is found to be in need, support should be provided to children and their families to improve their outcomes.

06 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 110271)

Asked by: Loughton, Tim | **Party:** Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many registered foster carers there have been in each of the last 10 years.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

This is a matter for Ofsted. I have asked Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, to write to my hon. Friend the Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) with the information requested.

The response from Ofsted can be seen in [Deposited Paper \(DEP2018-0173\)](#).

02 Nov 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 105480)

Asked by: Sheerman, Mr Barry | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment has been made of the likely causes leading to the decrease in fostering applications from 2015-16.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

The Ofsted report, 'Fostering in England 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016', notes that the decrease in applications during this period may be explained by the fact that almost one quarter of agencies (105) did not submit data about their prospective households.

The National Fostering Stocktake is exploring the recruitment and retention of foster carers, including barriers to recruitment. The independent external reviewers will report to Ministers with recommendations at the end of the year.

14 Oct 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Care Leavers](#) (PQ 9411)

Asked by: Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the annual cost is of the Government's policy Staying put, arrangements for care leavers aged 18 and above to stay on with former foster carers.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

In the year ending 31 March 2016, there were 1,230 care leavers who had ceased to be looked after from a foster placement on their 18th birthday and were still living with their former foster carers aged 19 or 20.

Experimental statistics¹ show that in the year ending 31 March 2016 there were 1,440 similar care leavers aged 18 who were living with former foster carers.

These figures and related information can be found in Tables F1b and F1d in the statistical first release *Children looked after in England including adoption: 2015 to 2016* at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2015-to-2016>.

The Department for Education is providing £22.85m to local authorities to fund Staying Put arrangements during 2017-18. The new care leaver strategy, *Keep on Caring*, published in July 2016 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-on-caring-supporting-young-people-from-care-to-independence>, confirmed that we will continue to provide funding to local authorities to implement Staying Put through to 2019-20.

1. Information on 18 year old care leavers was collected for the first time in 2016. Analysis suggests that some local authorities have not provided data for around 11% of all 18 year olds. Therefore this data has been published as experimental statistics and should be treated with caution.

12 Sep 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

[Foster Care](#) (PQ 8926)

Asked by: Austin, Ian | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children are awaiting for a foster care placement in England.

Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill | **Party:** Conservative Party
| **Department:** Department for Education

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you and a copy of her reply will be placed in the libraries of the House.

11 Sep 2017 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons

Grouped with PQ8925 (regarding the numbers of registered foster carers), the response from Ofsted can be seen in [Deposited Paper DEP2018-0156](#).

5. Further reading

5.1 Sector publications

Barnado's has published a number of papers on [fostering and adoption](#).

Children and Young People Now have pulled together several reports on the care of the foster care system: see [Special Report: Foster care](#), 14 March 2017

[TACT Briefing on the independent review, Foster Care in England](#), TACT, December 2017

[Care leavers' views on their transition to adulthood: a rapid review of the evidence](#), Coram Voice, October 2017

[Call to Action: TACT's Manifesto for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2017 – 2020](#), TACT, 2017

[State of the Nation's Foster Care 2016](#), Fostering Network, January 2017

[CUTS - the view from foster carers \(England\): the impact of austerity measures on fostered children and the families that care for them](#), Fostering Network, April 2016

- Summarised in this [press release](#).

Parliamentary publications

[Key issues in fostering: capacity, working conditions, and fostering agencies](#), Commons Library briefing paper, July 2017

[Mental health and well-being of looked-after children](#), Education Select Committee, 28 April 2016

[No Good Options: Report of the Inquiry into Children's Social Care in England](#), All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children, March 2017

Official publications

Mary Baginsky, Sarah Gorin and Claire Sands, [The fostering system in England: Evidence review](#), Department for Education, King's College London and Quest Research and Evaluation Ltd, July 2017

[Why Foster Carers Care part two: The values and motivations profile of newly approved foster carers](#), Fostering Network on behalf of the DfE, 2015

[Why foster carers care: how understanding values can transform relationships and improve services \(Part 1\)](#), Fostering Network on behalf of the DfE, 2013

Academic

The Rees Centre at the University of Oxford researches fostering. Their publications can be seen on the [Rees Centre website](#). The journal [Adoption and Fostering](#) publishes a great deal of information on fostering, although the Library does not have online access.

Dinithi Wijedasa, [‘People like me don’t have much of a chance in life’: comparing the locus of control of young people in foster care with that of adoptees, children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children in the general population](#), *Adoption and Fostering*, Volume: 41 issue: 1, page(s): 5-19 (March 2017)

- Not available via the Library however it is summarised in the article [Comparing the Locus of Control of Young People in Foster Care](#), *Children and Young People Now*, 29 June 2017

Stephen Rock, Daniel Michelson, Stacey Thomson and Crispin Day, [Understanding Foster Placement Instability for Looked After Children: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence](#), *The British Journal of Social Work*, Volume 45, Issue 1, 1 January 2015, Pages 177–203

- Not available via Library however the authors find that
[...] key protective factors included placements with siblings, placements with older foster-carers, more experienced foster-carers with strong parenting skills, and placements where foster-carers provide opportunities for children to develop intellectually.

Rebecca Tunstall, [The costs to foster carers of providing accommodation for fostering: a report for the Fostering Network](#), University of York, October 2014

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