

Independent provider alliance welcomes Prime Minister's approach to intervening in failing children's services

The Children's Services Development Group (CSDG) has welcomed the new agenda set by the Prime Minister that failure in children's services will no longer be tolerated. The Government has identified poor commissioning as the root cause of failure and has been clear that that new models of service delivery are required to improve quality and outcomes.

CSDG has been campaigning for reform in the commissioning of services by effectively benchmarking all providers, local authority, independent, and voluntary on value, quality, cost, and crucially – outcomes.

CSDG spokesperson Lizzie Wills said: ***CSDG warmly welcomes the Government's clear and transformative commitment to improving children's services. CSDG has been constructively engaging with No.10 and the Treasury over a long period in order to highlight the entrenched bias that exists as a result of local authorities being both the commissioner and the provider of children's services.***

This relationship invariably means that children are placed in services perceived to be the lowest cost, rather than those which best meet their needs. We hope this renewed focus on outcomes and value for money will mean the innovation and best practice that exists in the independent and voluntary sectors will be recognised and harnessed to improve the lives of our most vulnerable children.

In the context of the Spending Review last month, and continued pressure on local authority budgets, it is imperative that local leaders maximise the expertise and investment that is available. Until local authorities equally consider the services that exist beyond their own in-house provision, children in care will not have equal opportunities to their peers.

CSDG looks forward to seeing further detail on these plans and engaging and collaborating with central and local government.

For too long, looked after children and children with complex needs have achieved below average educational outcomes or been five times likelier to be convicted of a crime than their peers. We must break this cycle and ensure the care system acts as a springboard to success.

CSDG welcomes the acknowledgment by government that the children's services market needs reform.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. This press release is in response to the Prime Minister's key note speech which can be found [here](#).
2. For more information, please contact Jessica March at jessicamarch@westminsteradvisers.co.uk or on 0203 102 3621.
3. [CSDG](#) is an alliance of independent providers of care and specialist education services for children and young people with complex needs. Members include Acorn Care & Education, Foster Care Associates, National Fostering Agency, Options Group, SENAD Group and Witherslack Group.

4. To see CSDG's most recent report, which calls for the introduction of a National Outcomes Framework, *Collaborating for better outcomes: final report form the Children's Services Taskforce*, please use this link on CSDG's [website](#). This report was published jointly with the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU).