

Independent provider alliance welcomes Queen's Speech announcement of standards for local authorities as 'corporate parents'

For immediate release – Wednesday 18th May

The Children's Services Development Group (CSDG) has welcomed the announcement of the Children and Social Work Bill in the Queen's Speech to improve children's services and opportunities for care leavers.

The Bill announced today will seek to set standards for local authorities to act as a 'corporate parent' in order to better support children in care and as they move to adult life. We hope this measure, as well as moves to enhance opportunities for care leavers, will help improve life chances for the most vulnerable young people in our society.

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 Andrew Isaac said: ***CSDG warmly welcomes the Government's continued clear and transformative commitment to improving children's services. New standards for local authorities as 'corporate parents' is a step in the right direction. CSDG has been constructively engaging with the Government over a long period 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 ensuring authorities act as a 'corporate parent' will improve placement decisions and long-term outcomes.

We also welcome the announcement of support for innovation in children's social care by allowing local authorities to pilot new and innovative approaches. We hope that a 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 by authorities in developing models of best practice.

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

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Notes to Editors:

1. This press release is in response to the Queen's Speech.
2. For more information, please contact Nicholas Charalambides on 0203 102 3628 or nicholascharalambides@westminsteradvisers.co.uk.
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.