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Press release

For immediate release

Independent provider alliance welcomes Prison Reform Trust review into links between care and custody

The Children's Services Development Group (CSDG) has welcomed the launch of an independent review by the Prison Reform Trust, chaired by crossbench peer Lord Laming, into links between care and custody.

CSDG spokesperson Lizzie Wills said: *CSDG welcomes the announcement by the Prison reform Trust that they will be conducting an independent review to consider the reasons behind, and how best to tackle, the over representation of looked after children in the criminal justice system in England and Wales.*

Looked after children are still much more likely than other children to end up in the criminal justice system or not in employment, education or training.

Looked after children aged between 10 and 17 years are more than five times as likely to be convicted of a crime or subject to a final warning or reprimand than other children and CSDG believes this must be addressed.

Children need stability in order to feel safe and flourish, and getting placements right first time is one important way to improve outcomes. CSDG are concerned that Local authorities continue to commission placements based on short-term affordability rather than the service that best meets the child's need. This invariably leads to multiple failed placements and further emotional upheaval.

CSDG is calling for a number of changes to children's services in order to improve outcomes for children, including those who end up in the criminal justice system. These are:

- Multi-year budgets to encourage local authority children's commissioners to consider 'whole-life costs' of children through early intervention.
- Adequate funding and support for foster carers in 'Staying Put' arrangements, and effective regulation of accommodation for care leavers.
- The introduction of a National Outcomes Framework which effectively benchmarks all providers, local authority, independent, and voluntary on value, quality, cost, and crucially – outcomes.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. For more information, please contact Jessica March at jessicamarch@westminsteradvisers.co.uk or on 0203 102 3621.
2. [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, Priory Group, SENAD Group and Witherslack Group.
3. 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).