

## Independent sector welcomes residential care reforms

The Children's Services Development Group, a policy coalition of leading independent providers of specialist services for looked-after children welcomes the Children's Minister's recent announcement of measures to strengthen the residential care system.

With 7,900 of the 67,000 looked-after children in the UK cared for in residential homes, CSDG believe that residential care plays a vital role as part of a range of provision for children with complex needs

Speaking on behalf of CSDG, Brian Durham, Managing Director of Young Foundations, said, *"We welcome the measures announced that will ensure that the system always holds the best interests of the child at its heart.*

*Many children in residential homes will have had multiple placement breakdowns and are often have the most complex needs. Residential care can provide young people with specialist therapeutic support that will enable them to live fulfilled adult lives – and we welcome any measures that will strengthen these vital services".*

Measures to improve staff training and tighten up regulation around out of area placements will have clear benefit but must be accompanied by closer working between providers, authorities and other agencies at a deeper, strategic level.

However, the group did urge policymakers to remember that out of area placements are often made because specialist support is not available in a local area. Steve Page, Chief Executive of Acorn Care and Education, speaking on behalf of the CSDG said: *"The entire sector must work together to design and develop provision in the local area".* It is also important to remember that, for others, it is in their best interests to be removed from an abusive or harmful environment, which has led to them being taken into care.

CSDG is committed to working together with the Department for Education, local authority partners and other stakeholder groups to take these reforms forward and to jointly design the highest quality services that consider the holistic needs of the child.

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### About the Children's Services Development Group:

- *The Children's Services Development Group is a policy coalition of leading independent providers of specialist services for looked after children and young people with complex needs.*
- *Its members – Acorn Care & Education, Hesley Group, National Fostering Agency, Options Group, Priory Education Services, SENAD Group, Witherslack Group and Young Foundations – provide services to vulnerable young people, delivering excellent outcomes and value for money across the UK.*
- *For more information please visit [www.csdg.co.uk](http://www.csdg.co.uk)*