



The Health and Social Care Bill must deliver for children and young people

Organisations that promote the health and well-being of children and young people have come together to ensure that the Health and Social Care Bill leads to improved and integrated services for all children across the country, particularly for vulnerable groups and those with complex needs who often struggle to receive adequate care. While the work of the NHS Futures Forum has led to some improvements in the overarching proposals, there is still some way to go to ensure the Bill delivers for children and young people. We urge Peers scrutinising the Bill to consider the following:

Children's health must be given the priority it deserves

The Health and Social Care Bill, with its scope of comprehensive reform of the NHS structures, offers a real opportunity to address some of the well-documented challenges the system presents in delivering services for children and young people. Children access a distinct range of services, often separated from the rest of the population by the structures of the health system itself. There is extensive evidence that building good physical and mental health in early life is linked to wellness and resilience in later life. Yet, only last year, Sir Ian Kennedy's independent review raised concerns about the lack of relative priority given to children and young people in the health service.¹ There is a real imperative for a focus on getting it right for children and young people. We are therefore calling for: the Secretary of State to prioritise child health through the 'mandate'; the NHS Commissioning Board to take a lead role in championing the specific needs of children and young people, particularly those with complex needs; and government to make a clear statement as to how the revised reforms will deliver improvements in services for children and young people.

¹ *Getting it right for children and young people: Overcoming cultural barriers in the NHS so as to meet their needs*, A review by Professor sir Ian Kennedy, September 2010

Children and young people must have a voice in the new health system

Government must be clear that a voice for patients means a voice for children and young people, ensuring that they have a say in decisions about local services and their own healthcare. Children² and young people have a right to be listened to, and they have a positive contribution to make in shaping their services. LINKs, the predecessor to local HealthWatch, have been inconsistent across the country in involving children and young people, and some have been confused about whether this is even part of their remit. We are therefore calling for the Bill to make explicit that the activities of Local HealthWatch cover children and for HealthWatch England to play its part in championing children and young people's involvement, including the involvement of those who particularly struggle to make their voices heard.

There must be a framework for integration of services for children locally

Children and young people's health and well-being is enhanced through a wide range of services, beyond health. Schools and colleges, children's centres, family support and parenting services, youth services and youth offending teams, as well as social care, all have a vital role to play. Health and Wellbeing Boards have the potential to bring these services together, allowing for more integrated commissioning and delivery. However, the Bill as it stands does not make this a requirement of the new boards. We are calling for a stronger role for Health and Wellbeing Boards to bring together the *full range* of local children's services.

We need to be sure that the creation of potentially unaligned local authority and health commissioning boundaries does not jeopardise local integration and vital joint working on issues such as safeguarding and looked after children. While there have been assurances that such crossing boundaries will not be the norm, there is a need for a more robust solution. We are therefore calling for clinical commissioning groups whose boundaries do not align with local authorities to be required to set out *specifically* how they will establish effective relationships with partners to promote the wellbeing of children locally.

The whole health service must be integrated to promote children and young people's health

In the new system, children and young people with the most complex needs and those moving into adulthood will be using universal and specialist services commissioned at varying levels – national by the NHS Commissioning Board, local by clinical commissioning groups and local authorities, and through larger consortia of local commissioners. It is crucial that there is clarity on how the different levels fit together and who will be responsible for ensuring this happens for each individual child across their life course. We are therefore calling for clear guidance from the NHS Commissioning Board for local commissioners, to avoid the reforms exacerbating existing disconnects in the system at transition from child to adult services, between universal and specialist services and between services for parents and their children.

This statement is supported by: 4Children; British Association for Adoption and Fostering; British Association for Community Child Health; British Academy of Childhood Disability; Catch22; CLIC Sargent, Council for Disabled Children; Early Childhood Forum; Every Disabled Child Matters; Fostering Network; NCB; NCVYS; Netmums; The Children's Society; Participation Works and Young Minds

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² Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child