



2021-0012879VFPO

Vicky Ford MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

Ms Carlyne Willow
Founder Director, Article 39
By email: carolyne.willow@article39.org.uk

4 March 2021

Dear Carlyne,

Thank you for your letters of 5 and 18 February, addressed to the Secretary of State, about the children's social care review. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

May I begin by wishing you and your co-signatories well in these challenging times.

The independent review of children's social care will set out to radically reform the system, and we will shortly be setting out timings for this ambitious work.

This review builds on the government's recent work to support vulnerable children, including an additional £24 million investment in 2021-22 to expand capacity within secure children's homes, £165 million funding for the government's Troubled Families Programme, an investment of almost £4.4 million to extend COVID-19 response programmes reaching 'hidden' children and creating a National Centre for Family Hubs that will improve families' access to vital services across the country. The government will also shortly respond to the consultation on unregulated provision.

Mr Josh MacAlister will permanently step down from his role at Frontline to take up the role of independent reviewer. This will ensure he is able to act independently and focus his full efforts on the review. He will be expected to comply with the Seven Principles of Public Life, in line with standard practice for senior appointments.

Mr MacAlister brings a wide range of experience to this role and was chosen for his understanding of the challenges facing the system and his experience of implementing innovative solutions. It is common practice for independent reviewers to be directly appointed based on their expertise. Whilst the lead reviewer will ultimately make a final set of recommendations, this will be on the basis of extensive consultation with other groups and individuals whose voices should be heard.

The review will centre and prioritise those with lived experience of children's social care. It will be supported by an "Experts by Experience" group which will be made up of children, young people and adults who have had direct experience of children's social care. This group will advise the reviewer on the best way to do this. This is just one of the ways the review will engage with people with lived experience of children's social care and the review will set out publicly its plan and approach to engaging those with lived experience of children's social care.

Thank you for writing about this important matter. I hope this reply is useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicky Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Vicky Ford MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families