

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	Strengthening support for looked after children, care leavers and their families: changes and updates to the Part 6 Code of Practice for Looked After and Accommodated Children and Special Guardianship Code of Practice.
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Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:	Delyth Jewell MS, Deputy Minister for Social Care, Mental Health and Women's Health
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SECTION 1. WHAT ACTION IS THE WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING AND WHY?

Context and current position

The number of children looked after has been on an upward trend in recent years and peaked at 7,241 in 2021. Following a decrease in 2022, the number of children looked after increased in 2023 and further increased slightly to 7,198 as at 31 March 2024. On 31 March 2025, 7,072 children were looked after, a decrease of 1%. This equates to a rate of 114 per 10,000 population aged under 18. The number has increased substantially in recent years, from 5,760 in 2013, or 91 per 10,000.

To treat the underlying cause of the consistent numbers of children entering care will require continued work across Welsh Government including areas such as increasing awareness of impact of trauma across sectors, continued work on early intervention and prevention systems and services, tackling child poverty, education attainment, health and wellbeing, youth justice and family justice.

Currently, local authorities provide various placements to accommodate looked after children:

- With a relative (a “kinship placement”)
- With foster parents
- In a children’s care home
- In other residential settings such as supported lodgings, a school or, for a small number of cases, a secure unit
- With a prospective adopter (in certain circumstances)

Of the current cohort of looked after children, 8% had lived in three or more placements during the previous 12 months. The majority (68%) were in foster placements, followed by being placed with their own parents or other person with parental responsibilities (12%) and 14% were in placements in secure units, children's homes or hostels.

Placements are currently provided by a local authority through its in-house services or by providers in the private and third sectors. In Wales, all providers of a care home service for children or a fostering service are required, by the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, to register with the Welsh Government (in practice, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)).

The growth of the number of looked after children in Wales has resulted in a long-term trend of increasing use of care, along with presentation of more complex needs, and has presented significant challenges to local authorities and impacted on children and young people themselves.

Matching the needs of children with appropriate placements across the range of options such as fostering and care homes, is becoming more difficult. It is sometimes hard for local authorities to find suitable placements in suitable locations that meet children's needs. This can adversely affect placement choice, permanency and stability and consequently, outcomes for children and young people.

The proposed changes considered within this assessment are:

Part 6 Code of Practice for Looked After and Accommodated Children

- Alignment of Part 6 (adoption) and Part 4 (care planning) frameworks – the proposed changes provide clearer, more detailed guidance to support a consistent approach to adoption planning. This covers:
 - how relevant legislation, regulatory duties and practice requirements align across Part 6 and Part 4.
 - the different stages of adoption planning, including early permanence, family group conferences, care planning, placement and review.
 - the roles and responsibilities of social workers and reviewing officers in supporting effective adoption planning and decision-making.
- Supporting consistent adoption planning and review – the proposed changes strengthen expectations to promote greater consistency in practice across Wales. This includes:
 - ensuring a clear and structured approach to planning and reviewing placements for adoption.
 - supporting better informed decision-making at key stages of the child's journey.
 - reducing variation in practice across local authorities.
- Incorporation of the Welsh Early Permanence (WEP) Framework – the proposed changes incorporate the WEP Framework into the Code. This covers:
 - the role of early permanence in achieving timely outcomes for children.
 - how the WEP Framework should be applied in practice, alongside existing care planning processes.
 - expectations for practitioners in embedding early permanence approaches within decision-making.
- Review and visiting requirements for kinship foster placements – the Fostering Panels and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2026 introduce changes to provide greater flexibility for fully approved kinship foster carers. The Code provides the supporting guidance on how these arrangements should be applied in practice. This includes:
 - the ability to tailor review and visiting arrangements to the individual needs of the child and family in line with the Regulations.
 - reducing unnecessary intrusion while maintaining appropriate safeguarding measures.
 - ensuring continued oversight and monitoring of the child's welfare.
- Access to the enhanced fostering allowance – the proposed changes provide clearer guidance on how foster carers can access the enhanced fostering allowance.

- A new corporate parenting chapter providing additional guidance for local authorities in their role as corporate parents. This chapter covers:
 - the setting up of corporate parenting panels supported by care-experienced young people.
 - the role of corporate parents in providing information to care-experienced children and young people when in care and also when leaving care.
 - examples of how local authorities can report progress in delivering their role as corporate parent.
- Strengthening the importance of the voice of the child - the proposed changes strengthen the importance of listening to the voice of the child in various processes including review meetings.
- Strengthened guidance on the undertaking of moves and review meetings - the proposed changes refer to the handling of looked after children's personal belongings and avoiding where possible the use of black bags in placement moves. In addition, trying to avoid holding review meetings during lesson times.
- Terminology and definitions – the proposed changes aim to ensure that language used within the Code is clear and consistent. This includes:
 - using terminology that aligns with current legislation and policy frameworks.
 - improving clarity for practitioners in understanding key terms and processes.
 - supporting consistency in interpretation and application across

Special Guardianship Code of Practice

- Special guardianship support plans – the proposed changes introduce a requirement for the use of national support plan templates to promote consistency across Wales. This covers:
 - the use of national templates as a statutory requirement for all local authorities when developing special guardianship support plans.
 - providing a structured and evidence-based approach to assessing need, planning support and reviewing arrangements.
 - how support plans should align with wider assessment, care planning and review processes.
 - reducing variation in practice and ensuring a clear, consistent and equitable offer of support for special guardians, children and families across Wales.

The changes to the both the Part 6 and SGO Codes align with recent regulatory changes and aim to tackle long-standing issues by making services more accessible, consistent, and tailored to individual needs. By introducing statutory templates for support plans, and updating care planning and review arrangements, the proposals aim to ease pressures on carers and staff, promote consistency, and ensure fairer, more tailored support across Wales.

Additionally, the clarification of access to the enhanced fee for kinship foster carers improves equity and ensures carers are fully informed of their entitlements, helping to

sustain stable placements and reduce financial uncertainty. The changes also strengthen the alignment between Part 6 (adoption) and Part 4 (care planning) frameworks by bringing together legislative requirements and practice expectations into a more coherent and streamlined approach. This supports clearer, more consistent adoption planning and review processes across Wales, reducing variation in practice and improving decision-making at key stages of a child's journey. The incorporation of the WEP Framework further reinforces the focus on timely permanence, encouraging earlier planning, greater use of parallel planning approaches, and improved outcomes for children through greater placement stability

Under the Social Services Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 a local authority will share parental responsibility as a “corporate parent” for child looked after and the responsibility to support the child and young person as they transition to adulthood remains. This requires collaboration across different departments within a local authority and a shared sense of responsibility, particularly for social care, education and housing.

The Sixth Senedd Term saw a Programme for Government commitment to “strengthen public bodies in their role as corporate parents”. To support the delivery of this commitment the Corporate Parenting Charter was published in 2023. The [Corporate Parenting Charter](#) aims to facilitate how we can all work together to support and improve outcomes for care-experienced children and young people to have those life chances they deserve. The Charter is open not just to local authorities but also wider public bodies, third sector organisations and private bodies. It's about building a wider community network to support young people to have the same chances as other young people in Wales. The Charter includes 11 principles of Corporate Parenting which align to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC).

The proposed changes to the Part 6 Code including strengthening the importance of the voice of the child, moves and reviews will support the development of a better awareness and clearer understanding of expectation of the local authority in delivering its role as a corporate parent.

Prevention

The proposals make a strong and positive contribution to prevention, by focusing on early, consistent, and well-coordinated support for children, young people, and families within the care system. Across the proposed changes, there is a clear emphasis on reducing the need for escalation of support, preventing placement breakdowns, and improving long-term outcomes.

A central preventative element is the strengthening of corporate parenting responsibilities, which promotes earlier and more coordinated intervention across services and organisations. By embedding a shared responsibility for care-experienced children and young people, the proposals support a more proactive approach to identifying and addressing needs before they escalate.

Improvements to care and support planning, multi-agency working, and review processes provide a more structured and consistent framework for early identification of risks and

needs. This enables more timely interventions, reducing the likelihood of crisis situations, placement instability, or the need for more intensive support at a later stage.

The emphasis on placement stability, including clearer guidance on placement moves and strengthened planning processes, is particularly important from a prevention perspective. By reducing disruption and ensuring decisions are better planned and managed, the proposals help prevent the negative outcomes associated with multiple placement moves, including poorer emotional wellbeing and educational disruption.

The alignment of adoption and care planning frameworks, alongside the incorporation of the WEP Framework, further supports prevention by promoting earlier, stable permanence arrangements. This reduces delays and uncertainty for children and young people, helping to prevent longer-term adverse outcomes associated with prolonged time in care.

Changes relating to kinship foster care, including more proportionate review and visiting arrangements, support prevention by reducing unnecessary pressure on families and helping to sustain placements. This contributes to preventing breakdowns in care arrangements and the need for more disruptive alternatives.

In addition, clearer guidance on fostering allowances and special guardianship support planning helps ensure that carers and families receive appropriate support at an earlier stage. This can reduce financial strain and uncertainty, preventing issues from escalating and supporting more stable, long-term care arrangements.

While the proposals are expected to deliver strong preventative benefits, their effectiveness will depend on consistent implementation, sufficient capacity, and effective partnership working across services. There may be short-term challenges as systems and practices adapt; however, over the longer term, the proposals are expected to support a more sustainable, preventative system, reducing demand for crisis interventions and improving outcomes for children and families.

Corporate Parenting is about putting young people and their voice at the centre of services. Its aim is to address the stigma they experience and reinforce a sense of belonging by providing consistent joined up support which will make a huge difference to their well-being and addressing inter-generational cycles.

Through strengthened corporate parenting we can provide a focus on providing a stable education, a stable home and supporting young people to thrive as they approach independent living.

The NEET¹ (Not in employment, education and training) rate for people aged 16 to 24 in Wales was 17% in the year ending December 2025.

¹ [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\): 2025 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

The changes to the Part 6 Code support this vision. They are about increasing the voice of the child in assessment and placements as well as the development of policy and implementation at local level. It is about young people having the opportunity to hold to account and feed back into the system to make improvements.

The negative impact of these proposals will be minimal on existing services and workforce. The corporate parenting and related changes do not include any new duties on local authorities but provide guidance on how to deliver current duties within the Part 6 Code. Taking forward the proposals may have a minimal impact on resources within already pressurised local authorities.

Benefits

The proposed changes focus on addressing root causes rather than symptoms, delivering a number of benefits across the children's care sector including adoption planning, kinship care, fostering and special guardianship arrangements. By strengthening alignment between legal and practice frameworks and introducing clearer guidance, the reforms support a more preventative, responsive and child-centred system.

Care planning processes are better aligned across Part 6 (adoption) and Part 4 frameworks, supporting more holistic decision-making and ensuring children's needs are consistently considered throughout their journey. This improves the quality and consistency of adoption planning and review, leading to more stable and timely permanence outcomes.

The incorporation of the WEP Framework promotes earlier intervention and more proactive planning, helping children achieve stable, long-term placements more quickly and reducing uncertainty and delay.

Reforms to kinship care, including greater flexibility in review and visiting arrangements supported by updated regulations and guidance, enable a more proportionate and tailored approach. This reduces unnecessary intrusion into family life while maintaining safeguarding, helping to sustain placements within family networks and improve stability.

The introduction of statutory national templates for special guardianship support plans ensures a more consistent, structured and equitable approach to support. This reduces variation across local authorities and provides greater clarity for practitioners and families on assessment, planning and review processes.

Improved clarity around roles, responsibilities and entitlements, including access to the enhanced fostering allowance, supports greater transparency and fairness for carers. This helps carers feel more supported and informed, contributing to placement stability and better outcomes for children.

The changes also deliver wider system benefits by streamlining processes and reducing unnecessary administrative complexity. This supports more efficient use of resources and contributes to a more sustainable approach to service delivery.

Overall, the reforms promote social cohesion by enabling more children to remain within their families and communities where appropriate, reducing disruption and supporting stronger, more stable relationships, while ensuring consistent, high-quality support across Wales.

The benefits of the corporate parenting and voice of the child proposals will outweigh any impact as they will provide an opportunity to support local authorities with sharing learning about what works and raise awareness of the work they are taking forward. The proposals will provide guidance in the delivery of their role as corporate parenting. The changes to the Part 6 Code will also be accompanied by developing further toolkits on corporate parenting panels in collaboration with care-experienced young people.

Integration

The proposed changes to adoption planning, kinship care, fostering and early permanence reflect a more integrated, whole-system approach that extends beyond children's social care into wider public policy benefits. By strengthening alignment between Part 6 (adoption) and Part 4 (care planning) frameworks, and embedding clearer, practice focused guidance, the reforms support better coordination across services and improve outcomes for children and families.

Improving the consistency and quality of adoption planning and review processes enhances mental health and emotional wellbeing, as children benefit from more timely, stable and well-planned placements. The incorporation of the WEP Framework further supports this by promoting earlier decision-making and reducing uncertainty, contributing to more secure attachments and improved long-term outcomes.

The increased flexibility in review and visiting arrangements for kinship foster placements supports a more proportionate and family focused approach, helping children remain within their families and communities wherever appropriate. This strengthens social cohesion and cultural continuity, including supporting children to maintain their identity, relationships and connection to the Welsh language.

The reforms also contribute to improved economic stability and participation. Greater clarity on processes, including access to the enhanced fostering allowance, and more streamlined arrangements for foster carers, help reduce administrative burdens and financial uncertainty. This enables carers to better balance their caring responsibilities with employment or training, supporting sustained participation in the workforce.

For children and young people, more consistent care planning and improved placement stability create a stronger foundation for educational engagement and attainment, as reduced placement disruption supports continuity in learning and development.

The changes also support culture and the Welsh language by reinforcing the importance of recognising and responding to children's linguistic and cultural needs within care planning and placement decisions. This includes promoting access to Welsh medium services, supporting children to maintain their language, identity and heritage, and ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. In doing so, the reforms align

with wider Welsh Government objectives to strengthen bilingual service delivery and uphold cultural identity within care.

Overall, these changes demonstrate a person-centred and integrated approach, ensuring that improvements to adoption, fostering and kinship care not only strengthen the social care system but also contribute to wider health, education, cultural and economic outcomes across Wales.

Providing additional corporate parenting guidance will promote corporate parenting across local authorities and therefore support integration work in the delivery of:

- Improved access to education: supporting children's access to education and raising attainment.
- Identifying opportunities for young people to access training and provide support in finding of employment and apprenticeships which would lead to long term economic benefits.
- Improving the health of care-experienced young people through better support in accessing services such as mental health and early intervention.
- Promoting joint approaches to support care leavers in areas such as housing, employment and leisure.

Promoting integrated approaches across organisations which will result in efficiencies and save costs

Collaboration and Involvement

We are committed to working closely with stakeholders to co-design reforms grounded in lived experience and professional expertise. Partners with a shared interest include local authorities, CIW, the National Adoption Service and regional collaboratives, AFKA Cymru, The Fostering Network, independent service providers, social workers, children and families with lived experience, academics, and relevant Welsh Government departments. This broad partnership ensures the proposals are informed, inclusive, and responsive to sector needs.

The partners with a shared interest in the proposed changes related to corporate parenting and the voice of the child are local authorities. Other partners include wider public bodies, third sector organisations, private sector organisations and most importantly care-experienced children and young people.

People affected by the proposals have consistently called for more flexible, personalised support, especially for kinship carers and adopted adults. They have also stressed the importance of recognising carers as key members of the social care team.

Stakeholders have been actively involved throughout the development of the proposals. Engagement has included formal public consultation, targeted research by AFKA Cymru, and sector-led initiatives such as the WEP Framework. Stakeholders have helped identify practical challenges and areas for improvement. Their continued involvement will be essential in shaping final decisions, supporting implementation through training and

procedural updates, and contributing to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

The corporate parenting and related proposals have been developed through engagement with local authorities through All Wales Heads of Children's Services and participation officers, the Children's Commissioner for Wales office, the Corporate Parenting Implementation Group (which includes representatives from organisations with an interest including the third sector), the Care Experienced Network and private sector organisations with experience in the field. A session was also held with care-experienced children and young people to get their views on the proposals facilitated by Voices from Care Cymru. All these partners will have an active role in its delivery.

The proposals have been informed by the feedback from the first Wales Corporate Parenting Event which took place in February 2025 and was attended by over 100 organisations who have either signed up to the Corporate Parenting Charter or were considering signing up.

The Care Experienced Ministerial Summit with care-experienced children and young people was held in May where the issues that matter to them were raised directly with Ministers. This has fed into a revised Declaration which sets out the vision for services to support children in care and care leavers which will be signed by the First Minister and Young Ambassadors on 19th November 2025. This engagement and dialogue with care experienced children and young people will continue through participation groups such as Voices from Care Cymru, the Young Commissioners Group from the 4Cs and local authority young people's groups.

Impact

Overall, the proposed changes are expected to have a positive impact on children, young people, families and carers by improving consistency, clarity and stability across adoption, fostering, kinship care and special guardianship arrangements. The reforms are intended to support earlier permanence, strengthen care planning and review processes, improve placement stability, and promote a more equitable approach to support across Wales. The changes are also expected to support better outcomes through strengthened corporate parenting arrangements and a greater emphasis on the voice of the child. While there may be some short-term implementation pressures for local authorities and practitioners, these are considered proportionate and are outweighed by the anticipated benefits.

Risks

While the proposed changes are intended to improve consistency, clarity and outcomes, there are a number of potential risks associated with their implementation.

- **Variation in interpretation and implementation** – although the changes aim to improve alignment between Part 6 (adoption) and Part 4 (care planning) frameworks, there is a risk that local authorities may interpret or apply the guidance differently, leading to continued variation in practice across Wales.

- **Implementation challenges for practitioners** – the introduction of revised guidance, including the incorporation of the WEP Framework, may require additional training and adaptation. Without sufficient support, there is a risk of inconsistent application or delay in embedding new approaches.
- **Risk of unintended inconsistency during transition** – during the transition to updated processes, there may be short-term disruption to adoption planning, review arrangements and decision-making, which could affect timeliness for children.
- **Balancing flexibility with safeguarding in kinship arrangements** – while increased flexibility in review and visiting requirements is intended to reduce unnecessary intrusion, there is a risk that this could lead to reduced oversight if not applied appropriately, potentially impacting safeguarding.
- **Inconsistent application of flexibility** – without clear thresholds and expectations, practitioners may apply flexible arrangements differently, leading to inequity in how children and families are supported.
- **Capacity and resource pressures** – implementing more tailored, child-centred approaches to planning, review and support (including kinship care and adoption processes) may place additional demands on local authority resources and workforce capacity.
- **Reliance on statutory templates for special guardianship** – while national templates are intended to improve consistency, there is a risk that they could be applied too rigidly, limiting professional judgement or failing to fully reflect individual family circumstances if not used flexibly.
- **Understanding and awareness of changes** – carers and practitioners may not fully understand updated processes, including access to the enhanced fostering allowance, which could lead to confusion, under utilisation of entitlements or dissatisfaction.
- **Maintaining consistency alongside local flexibility** – while the reforms aim to balance national consistency with local flexibility, there is an inherent risk that achieving both objectives simultaneously may be challenging in practice.

Mitigating these risks will require a coordinated and proactive approach to implementation. This includes providing clear, comprehensive guidance within the Codes, alongside targeted training and support for practitioners to ensure consistent interpretation and application across Wales. Ongoing monitoring and review mechanisms will be important to identify any emerging inconsistencies or unintended consequences early, allowing for timely adjustments.

Strengthening communication with local authorities, carers and stakeholders will help ensure shared understanding of expectations, including the appropriate use of flexibility and new processes. In addition, maintaining a strong emphasis on safeguarding, professional judgement and the voice of the child will be critical to avoiding overly procedural approaches. Taken together, these measures will support effective implementation, promote consistency while allowing appropriate local flexibility, and ensure the intended benefits of the reforms are realised in practice.

The main risk in relation to the additional corporate parenting guidance which sets out how local authorities can fulfil their statutory responsibilities within the Part 6 Code could increase pressure on them and their workforce in the delivery of their role as corporate parents. However, there is evidence to show that work is already ongoing in many local authorities which aligns to the proposed additional guidance. The other risk is that when the Corporate Parenting Charter was published there was a call from different sectors to place the Charter on a statutory footing for all public bodies not limiting it to just local authorities.

We have explored these arguments widely through involvement and collaboration with representatives from across sectors including all Wales Heads of Children's Services and local authority participation officers, the Children's Commissioner for Wales office, the Corporate Parenting Implementation Group and engagement with care-experienced young people.

The Welsh Government will seek sector feedback, monitor outcomes, and provide clearer guidance where needed to address these potential issues.

Costs and Savings

Full details of the costs and savings associated with the changes can be found in the relevant Regulatory Impact Assessments, which have been published to support the introduction of the changes.

Mechanism

The changes will be introduced via secondary legislation in the form of revised statutory Codes of Practice.

SECTION 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 How have people most likely to be affected by the proposal been involved in developing it?

People most likely to be affected by the proposed changes have been engaged through a broad, inclusive, and iterative development process, ensuring their views have meaningfully informed the drafting and refinement of the Codes of Practice.

The Welsh Government has actively sought input from a wide range of stakeholders, including children and young people with care experience, care leavers, special guardians, foster and kinship carers, adoptive parents, and practitioners across social services and partner agencies. Engagement has taken place through formal consultation exercises, stakeholder forums, and sector-led discussions, designed to capture both lived experience and professional insight across all areas including corporate parenting, care planning, placements, adoption, and special guardianship.

A particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the voice of the child and care-experienced young people has shaped key aspects of the proposals. Targeted engagement activities included participation in events such as the *Voices from Care* “Proud to Be Me” event, discussions with the Care Experienced Network, and contributions from the 4Cs young commissioners’ groups. These engagements included participation from Welsh speakers and young people with protected characteristics, ensuring diverse perspectives were reflected.

In addition, the development of proposals relating to corporate parenting, placement stability, and care planning has been informed by existing evidence and campaigns, including NYAS Cymru’s “My Things Matter” campaign and relevant reports such as those produced by the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (Lwc/Luck report: the experiences of care experienced young people – the story so far). These inputs have helped shape provisions relating to placement moves, respect for children’s belongings, and the importance of stability and wellbeing.

Engagement has also been supported through accessible and bilingual consultation materials, with opportunities provided in a range of formats to facilitate participation across different needs and preferences. Feedback from practitioners and stakeholders has been particularly influential in shaping proposals relating to multi-agency working, review processes, early permanence, kinship care flexibility, and access to fostering allowances, as well as the development of consistent special guardianship support plans.

8.2 What are the most significant impacts, positive and negative?

Adoption, Fostering, Kinship and Special Guardianship

Overall, the proposals are expected to result in predominantly positive impacts, particularly in strengthening consistency of practice, promoting placement stability, and improving

outcomes for children, young people, and families involved in adoption, fostering, and special guardianship.

A key positive impact is the improved alignment between adoption (Part 6) and care planning (Part 4) frameworks, which is expected to support more consistent and effective decision-making. This should lead to earlier and better-planned permanence outcomes, reducing delay and uncertainty for children. The incorporation of the WEP Framework further strengthens this approach by promoting timely, stable placements and minimising disruption.

The proposals also introduce greater clarity and consistency in adoption planning and review, which will support practitioners in delivering more robust and transparent care planning processes. This is likely to improve long-term outcomes for children by ensuring that decisions are informed, timely, and centred on their best interests.

Changes relating to kinship foster care are another significant positive impact. Updated guidance reflecting the flexibilities introduced through the Fostering Panels and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2026 allows for a more proportionate approach to review and visiting arrangements, reducing unnecessary intrusion into family life while maintaining safeguarding. This is expected to improve placement stability and the experience of kinship carers, while still ensuring appropriate oversight.

The proposals also provide greater clarity and consistency in access to the enhanced fostering allowance, which should improve transparency and fairness across different types of carers. This is likely to support placement sustainability and help address financial barriers faced by carers.

In relation to special guardianship, the introduction of national support plan templates is expected to deliver greater consistency and equity in the assessment, planning, and provision of support across Wales. This will help ensure that children and families receive a clearer and more structured offer of support, regardless of where they live.

While the impacts are largely positive, there are some potential negative or neutral impacts to consider. The introduction of more structured frameworks and requirements may lead to increased administrative demands for local authorities and practitioners in the short term. There may also be implementation challenges, including the need for training and adaptation to new processes, which could place pressure on already stretched services. In addition, increased clarity around entitlements, such as fostering allowances or support plans, may lead to increased demand for services, with associated resource implications.

Overall, however, these potential negative impacts are expected to be short-term and manageable, and are outweighed by the longer-term benefits of greater consistency, improved outcomes, enhanced stability, and more equitable access to support for children, young people, and their families.

Corporate Parenting

Strengthening public bodies in their role as corporate parents was a Programme for Government commitment in the previous Senedd term. The commitment was one of 8 specific to children's social services which formed a framework for taking forward the Transformation Programme for Children's Services.

Delivery of this commitment has been in two parts the first of which is the delivery of the [Corporate Parenting Charter](#). The delivery of the Corporate Parenting Charter has had a positive impact as it has been about promoting and engaging with organisations wider than just local authorities who have the statutory responsibility to be corporate parents. The Charter is open to all public bodies, third sector and private sector organisations to sign up to its promises and principles and become corporate parents. The first Corporate Parenting Best Practice Event was held in February 2025 and had over 100 attendees from different sectors.

The event showed the positive impact that corporate parenting can have most importantly on care-experienced children and young people which was heard through their own voices at the event. It can also have a positive impact on organisations who sign up to be corporate parents, as it is about developing a community of support for young people so will encourage building connections across sectors and strengthen partnership working. This aligns to the well-being objective of **A Wales of cohesive communities**.

The proposed changes to the Part 6 Code do not introduce new duties. Rather, they provide additional guidance to support local authorities in fulfilling their existing corporate parenting responsibilities. As such, they are not expected to have any additional impact on the Welsh language. The changes also include minor additions to existing chapters of the Code to reinforce the importance of listening to and taking account of the child's voice during care planning, review meetings and placement decisions.

In 'More than Just Words' states that 'the use of Welsh language in health and social care is about individual centered care based on their emotional well-being and need and this is why it is so important.' This proposal focuses on corporate parenting which is a model which fully supports that vision of individually-centered care, and the fact that strengthening corporate parenting will encourage organisations to work together and provide a greater choice and control over the language in which care-experienced children and young people are engaged with and supported, which will strengthen their emotional well-being.

This proposal is part of the wider programme of Corporate Parenting building on the Charter and this will have a positive impact on the economy as it is about providing opportunities such as:

- Supporting care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales by helping them find a stable home and provide them with the opportunity to access education and fulfil their potential
- Ensuring that every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and is able to enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social

activities by making concessionary and/or discounted access available for sport, leisure and cultural activities

- Providing learning and progression opportunities within the organisation, such as work experience or apprenticeships, for care experienced children.

While the impacts of the proposals to strengthen corporate parenting are expected to be largely positive, there are some potential challenges and limitations to consider. The strengthened focus on corporate parenting and broader engagement across organisations may require additional capacity and resource commitments from public, third sector and private organisations choosing to adopt the Charter principles. This could place pressure on organisations with limited capacity, particularly in the early stages of implementation.

There is also a risk that, as the proposals do not introduce new statutory duties, levels of engagement and consistency across organisations may vary, which could lead to uneven experiences for care-experienced children and young people depending on where they live or which organisations are involved.

In addition, while strengthening guidance and partnership working is expected to improve outcomes, it may require ongoing coordination, training, and cultural change across sectors. This could take time to embed fully and may result in short-term implementation challenges.

8.3 In light of the impacts identified, how will the proposal:

- **maximise contribution to our well-being objectives and the seven well-being goals; and/or,**
- **avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The Welsh Government's reforms aim to create a more inclusive, equitable, and person-centred care system. These changes support the seven well-being goals of *the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*

A Healthier Wales

At the core of the changes is a commitment to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health for children, young people and families with care experience. Through strengthened corporate parenting responsibilities, clearer care and support planning, improved placement stability, and enhanced adoption and permanence frameworks, the Welsh Government aims to ensure that individuals receive consistent, coordinated and person-centred support.

The proposals place a strong emphasis on stability, continuity of care and effective planning, including improved guidance on placement moves, strengthened review processes, and greater alignment across adoption and care planning frameworks. These changes will help reduce disruption and uncertainty for children and young people, supporting the development of secure relationships and positive mental health outcomes.

In addition, the proposals promote more effective multi-agency working and consistent decision-making, alongside strengthened approaches to kinship care, fostering support, and special guardianship planning. Together, these measures contribute to more stable and supportive care environments, which are central to a preventative and holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

These changes align with the aims of strengthening corporate parenting and contribute to the vision of A Healthier Wales, where services are focused on early support, stability, and improving long-term wellbeing outcomes for care-experienced individuals.

A More Equal Wales

The proposals are expected to make a positive contribution to a more equal Wales by improving consistency, clarity, and access to support for children, young people, and families involved in adoption, fostering, kinship care, and special guardianship arrangements.

A key impact is the strengthening of equitable access to support and services, through clearer guidance on care planning, review processes, and entitlements such as fostering allowances and support planning. This helps to reduce variation in practice and outcomes across local authorities, ensuring that individuals receive a more consistent level of support regardless of where they live.

The emphasis on placement stability, early permanence, and effective planning is also important in reducing inequalities experienced by care-experienced children and young people. By minimising disruption and delay, the proposals support better long-term outcomes in areas such as education, emotional wellbeing, and life chances, which are often areas where inequalities are most pronounced.

The strengthened focus on kinship care and more proportionate arrangements recognises the specific challenges faced by families who step forward to care for children, often in crisis situations. By providing clearer guidance and more flexible approaches, the proposals help to reduce barriers and support more equitable experiences for kinship carers and the children in their care.

In addition, the introduction of a more consistent approach to special guardianship support planning will help ensure that children and families receive a clearer and fairer offer of support across Wales, addressing current inconsistencies and reducing potential disparities between local authority areas.

The proposals also promote a stronger corporate parenting approach, encouraging wider responsibility across public bodies and partners. This helps ensure that care-experienced children and young people are supported holistically, with improved access to opportunities and services, contributing to reducing disadvantage and promoting more equal outcomes over time.

Overall, the proposals contribute to reducing inequalities by improving the consistency, quality, and fairness of support, and by strengthening systems that enable care-experienced children and young people to achieve outcomes more comparable to their peers.

A Wales of Cohesive Communities

The proposals are expected to make a positive contribution to community cohesion by strengthening stability, relationships, and connections for children, young people, and families with care experience.

A key element of this is the emphasis on placement stability and continuity of care, supported through improved guidance on care and support planning, placement moves, and review processes. By reducing disruption and ensuring better planned and managed transitions, the proposals help children and young people to maintain stronger relationships with carers, families, and wider support networks, which are fundamental to cohesive communities.

The increased focus on kinship care and local placements further supports this aim by enabling children to remain within their families and communities wherever possible. This helps preserve important social and cultural connections, strengthens informal support networks, and promotes a greater sense of belonging.

The proposals also support more effective multi-agency working, encouraging closer collaboration between local authorities, carers, and partner organisations. This integrated approach helps build stronger local systems of support around children and families, contributing to more resilient and connected communities.

In addition, the strengthened corporate parenting approach promotes a shared responsibility across services and organisations to support care-experienced children and young people. By encouraging wider engagement beyond statutory services, the proposals help develop a more community-based model of support, fostering stronger partnerships and improving access to opportunities and services.

The improvements to adoption and permanence planning, alongside more consistent approaches to fostering and special guardianship support, also contribute to greater stability and long-term security for children and young people. This supports their ability to build lasting relationships and participate fully in their communities.

The changes contribute to a Wales of cohesive communities by promoting stability, stronger relationships, local connections, and coordinated support, enabling care-experienced children and young people to feel more connected, supported, and included within their communities.

A Globally Responsible Wales

The changes are expected to make a positive, though primarily indirect, contribution to a globally responsible Wales, particularly through promoting the principles of fairness, equity, and wellbeing for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society.

By strengthening corporate parenting, improving consistency in care planning, and supporting more stable and effective permanence arrangements, the proposals help ensure that care-experienced children and young people are supported to achieve outcomes comparable to their peers. This aligns with broader global principles of children's rights, social justice, and equality, as reflected in international frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The increased emphasis on stability, continuity of care, and strong relationships supports the development of resilient individuals who are better able to participate in society and contribute positively to their communities and, in the longer term, to the wider economy. Supporting improved life chances for care-experienced individuals contributes to a more inclusive and sustainable society, which underpins global responsibility.

The proposals also promote stronger partnership working and a shared, community-based approach to supporting children and young people, particularly through the corporate parenting framework. This reflects a commitment to collaborative and responsible practices that extend beyond statutory services, encouraging organisations across sectors to contribute to positive social outcomes.

While the proposals do not have direct international or environmental impacts, they support the development of fair, equitable and sustainable systems of care, which are consistent with the principles of global responsibility, including reducing inequalities and promoting long-term wellbeing.

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

The proposals are expected to have a positive impact on promoting a vibrant culture and supporting the Welsh language, particularly through reinforcing person-centred care and the importance of individual identity. Strengthened corporate parenting, care planning, and placement guidance emphasise the need to take account of each child or young person's language, culture, and background, recognising these as key components of wellbeing and care.

By promoting placement stability and local arrangements, the proposals may help children and young people remain connected to their communities, cultural networks, and Welsh-speaking environments. In addition, a more coordinated and consistent approach to care planning and support enables practitioners to better consider and respond to linguistic

needs, ensuring that services are delivered in ways that reflect and support cultural identity.

A Prosperous Wales

The proposals are expected to make a positive contribution to a more prosperous Wales, primarily through improving long-term outcomes for children and young people with care experience. By strengthening corporate parenting, improving care planning, and promoting greater stability and consistency across adoption, fostering, and special guardianship arrangements, the proposals support individuals to achieve better outcomes in education, wellbeing, and life chances, as well as improved skills, employability and economic participation over the longer term.

A key aspect of this is the emphasis on early permanence, stability, and effective planning, which can reduce disruption and enable children and young people to engage more consistently in education and development opportunities. Over time, this is likely to improve their ability to access employment, training, and wider economic participation.

The proposals also support carers and families through clearer guidance, more consistent processes, and improved access to support and financial arrangements. This contributes to more sustainable placements and increased participation in learning, skills development, and employment pathways. In addition, the strengthened corporate parenting approach encourages a wider range of organisations to contribute to supporting care-experienced children and young people, including through opportunities such as work experience, apprenticeships, and access to education and activities. This helps to build capacity across sectors and supports the development of a more inclusive and productive workforce, while reducing long-term inequalities and promoting sustainable outcomes for individuals and communities.

A Resilient Wales

Although the changes do not directly target environmental outcomes, they may lead to indirect benefits that support resilience. Encouraging local placements, improved placement stability and more proportionate review and visiting arrangements for kinship foster care may reduce travel for social workers and carers, lowering carbon emissions and supporting more sustainable service delivery.

The strengthened approach to care and support planning, multi-agency working, and review processes contributes to more coordinated and efficient systems, helping services to operate more sustainably and respond effectively to changing needs. In particular, improved alignment between adoption and care planning frameworks, alongside the incorporation of the WEP Framework, supports earlier and more stable permanency outcomes, reducing disruption and promoting long-term stability.

Enhancements to the Independent Reviewing Officer role and review processes further strengthen oversight and responsiveness within the system, while clearer guidance on

placement moves supports better planning and reduces unnecessary disruption. The introduction of more consistent approaches to special guardianship support planning also contributes to a more stable and predictable support system for children and families.

By embedding greater flexibility, clarity, and consistency across fostering, adoption, and special guardianship arrangements, the proposals enhance the resilience of care systems, enabling them to adapt more effectively to individual circumstances and pressures. This supports not only service resilience but also the resilience of children, young people, and families by promoting stable, supportive environments and stronger long-term outcomes.

Corporate parenting is intended to have a positive impact on the lives of care experienced children and young people and is key to the wider transformation of services that will benefit children and young people more broadly. The proposed changes to the Part 6 Code will not place additional duties on local authorities. They are about providing additional guidance to support current duties in a way that puts care experienced young people at the centre and strengthening the importance of their voice. Corporate parenting is about delivering better experiences and outcomes for young people; support service development and improvement; and further build partnership working with the wider community and developing a network of support for young people.

The Welsh Government can take action to promote children's rights, equalities, and the Welsh language, and to strengthen its contribution to these goals. The Corporate Parenting Charter includes within its principles, equality and eradicating stigma, and Welsh Government has signed up to the Charter. The Welsh Government will seek to avoid, reduce, or mitigate any possible negative impacts of these proposals by implementing a phased and careful approach to delivery; providing support and guidance to local authorities; monitoring and evaluating the progress; and engaging and consulting with children and young people and other stakeholders.

Work will continue to develop toolkits for corporate parents, and a community of practice is planned to provide a forum to share good practice and bring corporate parents together. Children and young people will be involved and consulted throughout this work.

Conclusion

Together, these reforms mark a significant transformation of services in Wales. They aim to improve outcomes for children, young people and families while supporting the Welsh Government's well-being goals. By promoting health, equality, community cohesion, cultural inclusion, and economic fairness, alongside safeguards to reduce risks, the reforms reflect a responsible and ambitious vision for a nurturing, inclusive Wales.

8.4 How will the impact of the proposal be monitored and evaluated as it progresses and when it concludes?

The impact of the changes will be monitored and evaluated through a combination of statutory mechanisms, sector collaboration, and feedback loops embedded within the regulatory framework. As the proposed changes are implemented, local authorities and service providers will be expected to adhere to updated Codes of Practice, which include

clearer guidance and expectations for service delivery, assessment, and review processes.

Monitoring will be supported by independent oversight, such as the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer in determining review timings for kinship placements. Additionally, the Welsh Government will publish a summary of consultation responses and may commission further analysis through accredited third parties to assess the effectiveness of the changes.

Evaluation will also occur through sector engagement, including feedback from practitioners, carers, and service users. For example, the statutory use of special guardianship support plan templates will promote consistency and allow for comparative analysis across local authorities.

To support implementation of corporate parenting and other related changes, work will continue with care experienced young people through organisations and networks representing them. This work will ensure children and young people feel as involved and engaged as possible.

At the end of the implementation phase, the changes will be reviewed collectively to evaluate their overall effectiveness. This will help determine whether the intended improvements have been achieved and ensure that the reforms are contributing meaningfully to better outcomes for children and families across Wales.