MAKING CARE PROCEEDINGS BETTER FOR CHILDREN

A report by the Child Protection All Party Parliamentary Group
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INTRODUCTION

The Child Protection All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) was formed to raise the profile of child protection in Parliament and to investigate policy matters. The officers of the group are: Chair, Meg Munn MP (Labour), Vice Chairs, Tim Loughton MP and Andrea Leadsom MP (Conservative), Treasurer Annette Brooke MP (Liberal Democrat) and Secretary, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson (Crossbench). The Child Protection APPG is grateful to the NSPCC who provide the secretariat.

In July 2012, the Child Protection APPG launched an inquiry to investigate a number of the family justice reforms that have been proposed by the Government within the forthcoming Children and Families Bill. The Children and Families Bill, expected early 2013, covers many areas including adoption, family law and parental leave. The draft clauses on family justice largely follow the significant work undertaken in the past two years as part of the Family Justice Review commissioned by the Government and the Welsh Assembly. These clauses set out strong incentives to eradicate delay as care cases progress through the courts by introducing a time limit of six months for completion and by focussing the court on those issues which are essential to deciding whether to make a care order.

The Child Protection APPG recognises the need for reform. The proposed reforms must improve decision making and outcomes for all children involved in care proceedings given both their vulnerability and the importance of court decisions. This report focuses on some specific areas of the reforms to inform MPs and Peers of critical areas for scrutiny.

As part of this inquiry the Child Protection APPG has received written evidence from 12 organisations. We also held three seminars with eminent speakers and a wide range of professionals to examine issues in detail and a further meeting with children and young people who have experienced the legal process. The inquiry focused on the following specific areas:

1. How can we ensure sufficient scrutiny of care plans when the range of issues for court scrutiny is likely to be reduced?
   • How can we ensure that care plans are of sufficient quality?
   • If the court's role in scrutinising care plans is to be rolled back, how can we ensure sufficient scrutiny of care plans?
   • How can existing structures within the courts and local authorities be used to support the development of the care plan and ensure that the child has the best experience possible?

2. How can we determine which cases should be exempt from the proposed time limit of six months?
   • In what circumstances should cases last longer than six months?
   • How can courts decide which cases should fall outside the proposed six month time limit?
   • How can the legislation be framed to ensure that judgments are made in the best interests of children?

3. How can we ensure that court decisions are always taken in the best interests of the child?
   • What more could be done to ensure that judges receive information about the impact of the decisions they make?
   • What best practice is there to ensure that children's views are taken into account?
   • Is there a bias in family courts towards adults?
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The care system supports and protects some of our most vulnerable children and young people, the majority of whom enter care as a result of abuse or neglect. Thanks to dedicated carers and professionals working with children there have been significant improvements to our care system in recent years. However, the changes that have been proposed within the Children and Families Bill come at a time when there is an ever increasing demand on our care system.¹

In recent years, the length of care proceedings has increased,² with potentially negative consequences for children and families. In order to reduce timescales and improve outcomes for children, the Family Justice Review final report stated that changes will be needed to the ways in which local authorities and the judiciary operate and work together.³

Evidence shows that looked after children are likely to have more insecure and disorganised patterns of attachment.⁴ This may stem from their experiences before entering the looked after system, or from their experience within the care system, such as the upheaval of multiple placements. Delays to decision-making can have an adverse effect on children as secure, positive attachments are essential for their healthy emotional development and the way in which they form relationships in later life. Poor attachment increases the likelihood that a child or young person will have low self-esteem; be at risk of psychosocial malfunctioning; be identified as bullies by their peers; be hostile and aggressive; be vulnerable to further abuse as they seek closeness in inappropriate relationships; and may deal with their anger through self-harm, criminal offending or risk taking behaviour.

Key recommendations

The Child Protection APPG welcomes the Government's aim to reduce unnecessary delay and drift in the care system. However, we believe that it is crucial government reforms maintain a focus on the best interests of the child and that the reforms are carefully scrutinised to ensure they do not have unintended consequences. The success of the legislation is very much dependent on the practice by which it is underpinned. Therefore this report also highlights issues in relation to practice which are wider than the scope of the Bill but must be considered as the Bill progresses through parliament. During our seminars we heard a number of important views which have led us to develop the following recommendations which we ask Government to consider and MPs and Peers to take into account as they scrutinise the legislative reforms.

¹ In England there were 67,050 looked after children at 31 March 2012, an increase of 2 per cent compared to 31 March 2011 and an increase of 13 per cent compared to 31 March 2008.
² When the 1989 Children Act was implemented, the average case was expected to take 12 weeks. However, the average duration of care proceedings doubled from just over 24 weeks in 1993 to nearly 48 weeks in 2002. In 2010, Barnardo's obtained figures via Freedom of Information requests which showed that the average time taken for the completion of care proceedings from application to order increased from 51 to 57 weeks between 2005/06 and 2008/09 with a gradual increase in each year.
Scrutiny of care plans

Courts currently scrutinise care plans which is valued by many professionals. Given that the level of court scrutiny of care plans is being rolled back, we recommend that:

**Recommendation 1:** Courts should still play a role in scrutinising some aspects of care plans beyond the Government’s proposals. We welcome the Government’s amendment to the clause which will clarify the role of the court’s to consider contact arrangement. There is a need to ensure the Bill is clear about the circumstances when this should take place. Issues such as sibling group placement, or contact and other family contact arrangements should be considered as these are important to the child’s long-term development.

**Recommendation 2:** The Government must ensure sufficient training and support for social workers to enable them to produce good quality care plans and to operate effectively in court. Pre-proceeding work should take place with the courts and social workers to help reduce delay by improving the quality of care plans before cases reach the courts.

**Recommendation 3:** Government must fulfil their commitment in the Family Justice Review to expand on the existing programme of good practice development in relation to the role Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) have in the scrutiny of care plans. Government should report back on further progress made. The Department for Education should consider how IROs could provide that scrutiny.

Six month time limit

The Government is proposing to introduce a time limit of six months by which care cases should be completed, apart from where cases are deemed to be ‘exceptional’. While the Child Protection APPG wholly supports the need to reduce unnecessary delay, we are concerned about a potential lack of clarity with the term ‘exceptional’ and how this will work in practice. Some planned interventions which are shown to be effective take longer than six months and it is important that these are not ruled out by this legislation. We also heard that for some children decisions are best taken over a longer period than six months. We recommend that:

**Recommendation 4:** The Government’s decision to remove the term ‘exceptional’ for cases that need to go beyond 26 weeks is welcome. We remain concerned, however, that it is not clear that decisions on timescales should always be taken in the best interests of the child. Some planned interventions take longer than 26 weeks and should not be curtailed by this legislation. We therefore recommend that the Government give further consideration to amending the Bill.

**Recommendation 5:** The Government must ensure that social workers receive training and support to produce high quality assessments and to give evidence in court as the recognised expert about the child and family. Expert witnesses should only be sought for specialised areas where there is insufficient evidence and to do so would help the court reach a decision in the best interests of the child.
Ensuring court decisions are in the best interests of the child

The Child Protection APPG is concerned about evidence it heard which suggests that family court proceedings are often led by judges who are not necessarily specialist in this area and that children do not always feel their views are heard by the courts. We recommend that:

**Recommendation 6:** The Government must fulfil their commitment in the Family Justice Review (via the family justice modernisation programme) to ensure judges who are specialists in family law are used in family courts on a permanent basis and that they are given the opportunity to develop a better understanding of current research regarding outcomes for children in various placement settings.

**Recommendation 7:** Judges should routinely ask children whether they would like to meet them in order to ascertain their wishes and find out more about them. Guardians should also prepare children adequately for appearances in care proceedings.
PART 1: SCRUTINY OF CARE PLANS

1. Local authorities are required to produce a care plan for use by the court for all children who are subject to care applications. This is one of the most important documents considered by the court, and should be treated as such in terms of the time and emphasis placed upon its development by local authority staff. The care plan contains information about how the child’s current developmental needs will be met as well as the arrangements for the current and longer term care for the child. It ensures that there is a long-term plan for the child’s upbringing (referred to as ‘the permanence plan’). It sets out the roles of the various professionals and, where appropriate, the family. Care plans should be clear about the desired outcomes for the child. This clarity is essential to ensure effective reviews of the child’s case which monitor the progress.

   The Family Justice Review said on the scrutiny of care plans that:

   “We believe this court scrutiny goes beyond what is needed to determine whether a care order is in the best interests of a child. Care plans are likely to need to change over time. Courts are not well equipped to scrutinise care plans and their involvement is not a guarantee of success. We also need to set against the possible benefit the cost and time it takes.

   So we recommend that courts should refocus on the core issues of whether the child is to live with parents, other family or friends, or be removed to the care of the local authority. Other aspects and the detail of the care plan should be the responsibility of the local authority. When determining whether a care order is in a child’s best interests the court will not normally need to scrutinise the full detail of a local authority care plan for a child. Instead the court should consider only the core or essential components of a child’s plan.

   We propose that these are:

   • Planned return of the child to their family;
   • A plan to place (or explore placing) a child with family or friends;
   • Alternative care arrangements; and
   • Contact with birth family – whether it should be regular, limited or none.”

2. Government proposals laid down in the Children and Families Bill set out that rather than scrutinising the full detail of the care plan prepared by the local authority, the court should consider only the core components of each plan. Specifically, the court is to consider whether the local authority care plan is for the child to live with a parent, alternative family member or friend, or whether the child is to be adopted or placed in other long-term care.

3. The inquiry heard that in some cases the scrutiny of care plans by courts can be particularly extended or time consuming. However, while participants agreed with the need to reduce delay in courts, many raised concerns about the scope of the proposed legislation and that a reduction in court scrutiny will affect the quality of the care plan that is delivered. Many attendees expressed the
opinion that family contact arrangements should be scrutinised by the court (as was recommended by the Family Justice Review) given their particular importance in relation to the wellbeing of the children, and we welcome the Government’s stated intention to amend the Bill to reflect this. It was felt that the long-term facilitation of family contact is a time consuming task and one that is vulnerable to breakdown in the absence of sufficient support.

4. Social workers told the inquiry they found presenting care plans before the courts to be effective in securing services for individual cases. In particular, examples were cited where scrutiny of contact arrangements for siblings resulted in changes which greatly impacted on children’s lives, such as ensuring siblings could remain in contact with each other. Participants described how in Section 20 cases (where a child is put in to local authority care voluntarily by the birth parents and which do not require court scrutiny) the quality of care planning can be poor and the delivery of plans can drift. The discussion emphasised that the courts provide the best forum to guarantee a comprehensive, collaborative approach after consideration of all relevant aspects of the case.

5. The discussion highlighted the central challenges that social workers face in producing high quality care plans. Participants felt there are important practical steps that can be taken to improve the quality of the care plans before they reach the courts; particularly in ensuring effective collaboration in the construction of care plans, especially where social services involvement is relatively recent. A coordinated agency response is essential for care plans to achieve the longevity required to be effective over the course of a child’s time in care. Attendees were especially concerned with the need to use resources more efficiently. There should be closer cooperation between agencies early on when drawing up the care plan to address areas of conflict.

6. The importance of sufficient training to ensure social workers are able to construct succinct and effective care plans capable of providing permanency at the earliest possible stage was highlighted. Social workers are under considerable time pressures and need sufficient time to formulate quality care plans. We heard that a number of social workers lack the required capability or experience. Courts can be intimidating places for social workers without training or experience. Seminar participants argued for social workers to have adequate support, management and supervision in order to produce care plans of sufficient quality. While many participants at the seminars were confident that there are well qualified and experienced social workers in many areas there was a reluctance to remove court scrutiny until there is greater confidence across the system.

“A detailed care plan has to be agreed by all stakeholders and backed up by adequate resources to ensure that the child’s needs are met”

BASW

“There are no short-term fixes to these problems. Remedies include more thorough training both in initial social work professional training and post-qualification. Mentoring by experienced practitioners will help ‘grow’ the next generation of social workers.”

Nagalro
7. Discussions also focused on the important role Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) play in reviewing care plans and that they could provide scrutiny if court scrutiny is scaled back as recommended in the draft clauses. The Department for Education have promised to expand and build on the existing programme of good practice development, working in collaboration with the sector around IROs in its response to recommendations 78, 79 and 80 of the Family Justice Review. However, the significant workload of IROs was repeatedly highlighted as a potential problem. The main handbook for IROs states that a caseload of 50–70 cases represents good practice for a full time equivalent IRO. However, many IROs have a much larger caseload – in one case an IRO was reported to have a caseload of up to 200 children.

8. Concerns were also raised about IROs' operational independence from local authorities. The National Association of Independent Reviewing Officers (NAIRO) recently wrote to ministers to express concerns that IROs are not able to operate with sufficient independence from the Local Authorities in which they are employed. It was suggested that the current management structure for IROs within local authorities presents a possible conflict of interest and that IROs were sometimes put under pressure from children's services to make specific decisions. IRO management was overall an issue of serious concern.

**Recommendation 1:** Courts should still play a role in scrutinising some aspects of care plans beyond the Government's proposals. We welcome the Government's amendment to the clause which will clarify the role of the court's to consider contact arrangement. There is a need to ensure the Bill is clear about the circumstances when this should take place. Issues such as sibling group placement, or contact and other family contact arrangements should be considered as these are important to the child's long-term development.

**Recommendation 2:** The Government must ensure sufficient training and support for social workers to enable them to produce good quality care plans and to operate effectively in court. Pre-proceeding work should take place with the courts and social workers to help reduce delay by improving the quality of care plans before cases reach the courts.

**Recommendation 3:** Government must fulfil their commitment in the Family Justice Review to expand on the existing programme of good practice development in relation to the role Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) have in the scrutiny of care plans. Government should report back on further progress made. The Department for Education should consider how IROs could provide that scrutiny.

“We would suggest that giving IROs a greater role in the court process would require that caseloads would need to be restricted at least to the level envisaged in the latest IRO guidance (The IRO Handbook 2010).”

Office of the Children's Commissioner in England

“Robust steps should be taken to ensure the protections of IROs from pressure and improper interference from their employing local authorities.”

Association of Lawyers for Children

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9. The Government has proposed a six month time limit for completion of care cases in the draft clauses of the Children and Families Bill. The proceedings can be granted an extension in certain circumstances.

10. The Child Protection APPG believes the Government should address the issue of delay in care proceedings. However, many concerns were raised about the definition of exceptional cases in practice and how the decisions will be made. Concern was expressed about whether 'exceptional' is a suitable term and whether it may be too restrictive. Participants raised that in their experience, approximately 30% of cases will last beyond 26 weeks, which would contradict the meaning of exceptional. It was argued that the more important issue is whether any delay is in the best interests of the child. Examples were given when cases needed extensions due to issues such as health, behaviour and even school examination timetables. Concern was expressed that the term 'exceptional' may force decisions to be taken earlier than what is in the best interests of an individual child. The most important issue is the child's timeframe and not an arbitrary time limit. We welcome the Government's removal of the term 'exceptional' and we look forward to discussing the impact of the new clause during the passage of the Bill.

11. Participants raised circumstances in which the best outcome for a child's long-term care plan could be achieved but in a longer period than 26 weeks. It is important to differentiate between delay caused by process issues rather than a decision to take longer in the best interests of the child. The impact of the proposed time limit on the paramountcy of the child's welfare is far from clear. The Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) and the New Orleans Model (which the NSPCC is piloting in the UK) both require longer than six months. Both have shown improved outcomes for children and adults in some cases. The inquiry heard from one young care leaver that while timescales are important, developing the most suitable plan should be paramount. She argued that care plans and court proceedings may be completed within a given timeframe but where they fail to incorporate opinions of the young person outcomes are unlikely to be in the best interests of the child. The needs of children must remain central to the legislation. Delays to placement are also not ideal, but in some cases assessment takes longer. This period of assessment is also an opportunity for parents to change their behaviour.

“While delays in care planning are not desirable, in practice some case assessments take longer than others. For example, in situations where parents are seeking treatment for substance misuse – the care planning process must facilitate opportunities for meaningful change in parental behaviour should it be in the long-term best interests of the child.”

NSPCC
12. Further concerns were expressed that in addition to six months being an arbitrary timeframe there could be manipulation of the period by certain work being done ahead of an application to court. There is also potential for the six month timeframe to become a target which local authorities use to place children regardless of whether or not it is the best outcome for the child. A rushed placement may result in further problems for the child which could conceivably delay a permanency solution. The six month limit must not become the most important consideration.

13. The inquiry heard that while the 26 weeks target was a good, aspirational target it is the quality of assessment and resulting care which must remain the central focus. Julia Brophy’s research on independent social workers’ involvement in care planning was cited to support the view that additional assessments can bring value to the process. Concern was also raised that a more significant problem is the excessive use of expert witnesses to try and reach conclusions in difficult situations. However, independent social workers are a resource that can help to reach a judicial decision where previously there has been insufficient evidence to do so. It was asserted that often it is concerns over the quality and timeliness of social care assessments that lead courts to seek specialist evidence from expert witnesses, with multiple additional assessments requested in some cases. Expert reports are now commissioned in around 90 per cent of public law cases with four experts consulted on average per case. An alternative would be to involve independent social workers sooner so that a resolution could be reached at a far earlier stage.

14. Social work assessments should be robust, clear and analytical, and delivered based on extensive contact with the family and in the home. If assessments are of a high quality and social workers have adequate training to attend and give evidence in court this should support the view of social workers as the expert in the court obviating the need to bring in expert witnesses.

15. The inquiry heard views that the one mechanism to achieve swift court proceedings could lie in family conferencing. By identifying issues such as how suitable a child is for adoption as well as carrying out sibling and parental assessments before taking a case to court, more suitable judicial decisions can be reached in a shorter timeframe and with the involvement of fewer experts. One of the greatest benefits to be derived from family group conferencing was the swift development of contingency plans should initial care objectives prove unsuccessful. Written submissions from the Family Rights Group and 4Children highlighted the effectiveness of family group conferencing in helping to identify alternative kinship carers early on in the care planning process. Without this mechanism it can take a significant amount of time before extended family or grandparents come forward as potential carers as they worry about the impact this may have upon their relationship with the parents. Evidence was presented of delay in a
number of cases due to the serial assessment of family carers rather than a full consideration of all options at the outset.

Recommendation 4: The Government’s decision to remove the term ‘exceptional’ for cases that need to go beyond 26 weeks is welcome. We remain concerned, however, that it is not clear that decisions on timescales should always be taken in the best interests of the child. Some planned interventions take longer than 26 weeks and should not be curtailed by this legislation. We therefore recommend that the Government give further consideration to amending the Bill.

Recommendation 5: The Government must ensure that social workers receive training and support to produce quality assessments and to give evidence in court as the recognised expert about the child and family. Expert witnesses should only be sought for specialised areas where there is insufficient evidence and to do so would help the court reach a decision in the best interests of the child.
PART 3: ENSURING DECISIONS ARE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

16. Our third seminar asked whether courts and judges get enough information about the subsequent development of cases in order to understand the impact of decisions. We also explored if there is a difference in the quality of the courts and the decisions that they take or the way they are organised. The inquiry sought to explore how children's views are taken into account and whether information is given to children in a format they clearly understand. In our final meeting with young people leaving care we heard whether they had been able to put their views to the court and about their experience in general of care proceedings.

17. Many seminar participants raised that there is no formal process for judges to learn about the outcome of the decisions they made and that they only receive information on an informal basis. Others felt that it is difficult to determine how useful further information would be to courts and at what stage that information should be communicated. Whilst it is tragic when care arrangements break down that is not to say that the alternative arrangements would necessarily have succeeded. Subsequent events that could not have been predicted by the court can impact significantly on outcomes.

18. Recent research suggests judges may benefit more from an understanding of contextual information rather than receiving feedback on individual cases. 62% of care plans either do not work out or fail to be implemented. Insufficient emphasis is placed upon the harmful effects to children of remaining with abusive parents pending permanent plans. If they understand the research evidence on the likelihood of care plans failing and the difficulties of achieving a successful return home to birth parents the judge may consider what is different in a particular case to justify their decision. Decisions regarding children's welfare are currently moving away from a preference for parental care as the most desired outcome towards greater recognition of the benefits of alternative care. One speaker suggested that a wider perspective on the impacts of different outcomes would be best achieved by targeting materials at members of the judiciary.

19. The value to judges of meeting children was discussed. It can assist in ensuring that children's wishes and feelings have been accurately understood. Children also often find reassurance in meeting the person who will be making fundamental decisions about them. Our consultation with young people from the Who Cares Trust and Newham heard of their frustration with a process which allows for strangers to make crucial decisions about their lives. The young people argued that children should be given the opportunity to meet judges at the earliest possible stage in court proceedings to ensure that they are seen as individuals rather than simply as 'cases'. The young people also expressed unhappiness with a lack of consistency with some children having the opportunity to meet the judge, and others not.

“The provision of information to judges, including information from IROs about what has happened to children who have been subject to care proceedings … would improve the quality of functioning of present structures.”

Family Justice Review
20. Seminar participants argued that family justice requires increased judicial specialism and continuity. The rotation of judges on a 10–12 week basis ignores the need for consistency, research awareness and relevant skill development. This rotation also means that judges who are not comfortable meeting children nevertheless preside in care cases.

21. The inquiry heard that there has been little research into the frequency and quality of obtaining children’s views in care proceedings. The panel suggested that there is a pressing need for research examining how often there is a discrepancy between the wishes children believe they have expressed to court guardians and the details which are ultimately noted in court records.

22. The young people also emphasised the critical importance of children being adequately prepared to appear in court. We heard from one young care leaver that a lack of clear, age appropriate information about the court process, questioning and outcomes left her confused and feeling as if she was in trouble. It was suggested that a YouTube film explaining the process would be really helpful. It is crucial that all children receive a high standard of preparation in order to familiarise themselves with the court and legal process. In the absence of such, we heard that young people felt ‘penalised’ by a system which asked questions they did not understand in an environment which they found threatening and therefore rendered them unable to express themselves.

23. The inquiry also heard from other participants that Cafcass officers and court guardians are very important in building strong relationships with each child. Gaining the confidence and monitoring changes in the feelings and preference of the child over time are essential to producing accurate court reports. Young people determined that a lack of consistency in terms of support workers and trusted adults is a major failing of the care system. They expressed frustration that the frequent turnover in social workers and guardians often left them feeling abandoned and hesitant to trust future care professionals. One young person said that where children are most commonly taken into care due to abuse or neglect it is crucial that guardians, carers and social workers are reliable and consistent.

24. The opinion was expressed that although courts are not intentionally biased in favour of adults, complex issues – such as objectives, timeframes, housing and parents’ desires – often distract from the child’s voice. The right of both children and parents to a family life (article 8) was an issue which appeared central to the question of bias towards adults within the court system. Best practice can only be achieved through the development of a culture which listens to children in family courts. We heard from young people, and in further written submissions from the Who Cares Trust, that training for all professionals across the family justice system in how best to work and communicate with children should be a matter of immediate importance. Specific dissatisfaction was expressed in relation to the current level of care.

“Because of children's relative vulnerability and dependence, their physical absence from court proceedings and the responsibilities conferred on parents by the law and social expectations, adults' voices and perspectives are heard more strongly in the family court than those of children.”

Cafcass

“It is vital that court processes are improved. This should not be seen simply as achieving better ways to investigate an issue, but rather as a way of meeting the child's right to be involved in decisions about their life.”

The Who Cares? Trust
provided for young people in the court process who reported feeling completely alone, particularly when giving evidence.

25. Attendees also suggested that the care planning process should feature increased opportunity for input from foster carers. While on the one hand it was argued that foster parents traditionally prefer to remain removed from the court process, participants across various disciplines said they are increasingly approached by foster carers who are seeking an increased role in care planning. The panel agreed that foster parents are a resource with extensive knowledge of the individual needs of a child and what may be in their best interests. Young people also expressed disappointment where their trusted foster carers who knew them the best were not given this opportunity.

**Recommendation 6:** The Government must fulfil their commitment in the Family Justice Review (via the family justice modernisation programme) to ensure judges who are specialists in family law are used in family courts on a permanent basis and that they are given the opportunity to develop a better understanding of current research regarding outcomes for children in various placement settings.

**Recommendation 7:** Judges should routinely ask children whether they would like to meet them in order to ascertain their wishes and find out more about them. Guardians should also prepare children adequately for appearances in care proceedings.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Child Protection APPG would like to thank the NSPCC for providing the secretariat and publishing the report. We would also like to thank all those who participated in the inquiry:

4 Children
Association of Lawyers for Children
The British Association of Social Workers
Cafcass
CISWA-UK
Family Rights Group
The Magistrates Association
Nagalro
National Association of Independent Reviewing Officers
The Law Society
The Office of the Children's Commissioner
The Who Cares? Trust
Matthew Sampson – Acting Director of Children, Young People and Families, Sheffield City Council
Bruce Clark – Director of Policy, Cafcass
District Judge Nicholas Crichton
Harriet Ward (Loughborough University)
Steve Crocker, Hampshire Children's Services Team Manager in Gosport
Kim Goode, Hampshire Children's Services Team Manager in Gosport
Alison Russell QC
Meg Munn MP
Tim Loughton MP
Ann Coffey MP
Andrea Leadsom MP
Earl of Listowel
Elfyn Llwyd MP
Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson

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