

Briefing note by Together Trust
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Tuesday 14th March

Please ask the government to #CommitToCare

In the last five years,
poverty has pushed
10,000
children to enter the
care system.

(Bennett, 2022)



By the time of the next Budget, 2000 more children will enter care linked to poverty unless the government acts now.

Please be a champion for 19.3 million families, 400,000 children in need, 80,000 children in care, and thousands of care leavers in England and ask the Chancellor to:

- 1) Not make low-income parents and families worse off.
- 2) Make a commitment to sustainable, long-term investment in the children's social care system.

How did we get here?

- Between 2010 and 2020, government funding to councils for children's services fell by 24% in real terms (NCB, 2021). In the same period, the number of children in care grew by 23% (GOV, 2022).
- In the last five years, 10,000 children have entered the care system linked to poverty ([Bennett, 2022](#)). Similarly, children from the poorest neighbours are 14x more likely to be referred to social care services than those from the richest ([Goldacre and Hood, 2022](#)).

- In 2021 the government committed to a Review of Children's Social Care with the aim of investigating how the care system could be improved. One of the Review's main findings was that a minimum of a £2.6 billion investment was urgently needed in the system, primarily in early help and intervention services that keep children and their families.
- The Chair of the Review stated that if this investment was not realised, the State would be spending upwards of £15 billion a year on children's care by 2030. It currently spends over £10 billion a year.

The government's response to the Care Review

- £200 million is the pot of funding which has been earmarked by the government to deliver its reforms. It is only 8% of what the chair of the Care Review said is necessary and just 2% of what the current system costs to maintain every year.
- From our work with care-experienced children and young people, we believe that some of the Department for Education's recent proposals have the capacity to make a positive difference to the lives of children in care if implemented well. These include care standards for all children across every setting and independent opt-out advocacy.
- Yet lack of central government investment means that councils cannot allocate enough resources to early intervention and preventative help, even though these are often the services which stop children entering the care system.

What next?

- Thirty five leading charities who support children in care have signed our [open letter](#) calling upon the Chancellor to #CommitToCare, including *Mencap* and the *British Association for Social Workers*.
- Please support our appeal by speaking at the Budget or within the House of Commons on this issue. We are happy to provide further information, statistics, and research to your office.

It's time for the government to #CommitToCare.