

EASTERN COLLABORATIVE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL NETWORK MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to July's ECCRN newsletter. This month, along with the usual news, developments, and research we have some spotlights on education, legislation, regulation & reflection. Phew! Please, absorb and enjoy!

Did you hear?

The Education Select Committee published their 4th report on Children's social care on 10th July 2025. [See here](#). The section on Residential Care has a good synopsis of the issues the sector faces such as placements out of area, supply & provisions. See pages 43-44.

It concludes:

"We agree that, for most children, a focus on supporting them to live in a family setting is the right one; however, this should not come at the expense of developing and maintaining high-quality residential care for children who need it. We urge the Department for Education to focus on the quality of provision as well as capacity and take steps to improve recruitment, retention and training of the children's home workforce."

A government response is due by the 10th Sept 2025.

Legislation

On the 12th June 2025 the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was discussed in the [House of Lords](#). Though Residential Child Care is largely unaddressed it is still important to know about their thinking in the relevant policy areas. For a helpful summary see NCERCC's write up [here](#).

Points debated:

- Regulating provider groups
- Tackling unregistered children's homes
- Financial oversight regime for some providers
- Limiting profits
- Supporting care leavers
- Deprivation of liberty
- Ill-treatment or wilful neglect

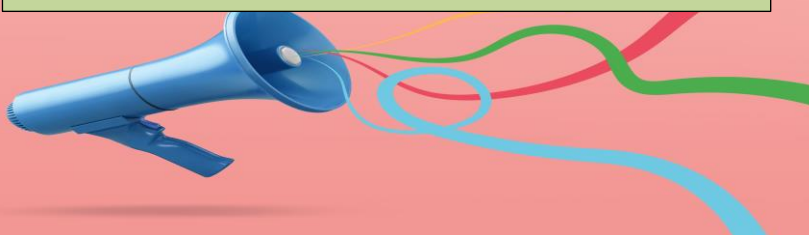
Another Bill...

The Placements at Distance Bill requires local authorities to:

- publish information about looked after children in distance placements
- develop and publish sufficiency plans in respect of their duty under section 22G of the Children Act 1989
- call for the Secretary of State to publish a national sufficiency plan in respect of looked after children in distance placements, and for connected purposes.

More information and thoughts on this Bill can be found [here](#) on the NCERCC's website.

Government Announcements



For the first time, the government has specifically targeted funding at children who have such complex needs that they are at risk of, or have been, deprived of their liberty. The Government are investing £53 million to create 200 new placements in high-quality council-run homes through its Plan for Change. Read more [here](#).



The department has also brought together an expert 'market intervention advisory group', which is working on the details of how the financial oversight and transparency schemes will work in practice to make as quick as possible progress to tackle profiteering, as well as how to bring in more voluntary providers.

Schemes are being considered to encourage charities and ethical investors to open children's homes, including through innovative funding mechanisms like social financing.

REGULATION



Changes to Social Care Common Inspection Framework - SCCIF

Recently Ofsted refined evidence requirements for children's experiences, learning, and health in secure homes. Added focus on equality, placement stability, and closed cultures. These changes aim to sharpen the focus on what matters most in children's lives, improve stability for vulnerable children, and ensure consistency across inspections.

Ofsted Commissioned Research

Ofsted commissioned the National Children's Bureau to research about how Ofsted might conceptualise vulnerability in relation to inspection and regulation.

From trait to state: how Ofsted might consider conceptualising vulnerability for inspection and regulation

This is useful practical research that can enhance a home's practice. In exploring how well settings and services recognise and respond to vulnerability, important questions for inspection and regulation might include *'how well do we know the children, families and communities we work with?'* and *'how do we understand and respond inclusively to their vulnerabilities in the way we practice?'*

NCERCC has a [summary and evaluation](#) available for download on its website.

RESEARCH

Research about the sector

Here is a little summary...In our view they need a commentary too as reading them is not easy! The density of evidence coupled with 'findings' which don't match lived experience make them tough to digest!

LGA –Commissioning: [Costs & complexity in care: The real drivers of high-cost placements for children in care](#)

DfE – Residential Child Care workforce: [Children's homes workforce census stage 2 and 3 report](#)

A little reflection...

Jonathan Stanley observed that [this](#) piece of creative writing he wrote for his NCERCC blog had echoes of the ECCRN July meeting.

A group of managers of children's homes are meeting, seated in a circle...

If you know of any creative writing about Residential Child Care, please let us know!

Related research

Increasing access to evidence-informed mental health service provision for children in care in England – National recommendations for change.

Led by Professor Rachel Hiller (UCL) researchers from the University of Cambridge, University of Sussex, Kingston University, Kings College London, University of Bristol and the National Institute for Health & Care Research (NICE) pooled their research evidence and then created some shared recommendations for change which span commissioning practices, integrated service delivery, and workforce training.

[Read about the national recommendations for change here.](#)

Context research

This government has a Family First outlook.

Evaluation of early intervention reforms show evidence of improved collaboration between agencies leading to more consistent support for families. More [here](#).

OPINIONS WANTED

Over several years Anders Bach-Mortensen has researched the 'care market'. He and his team are well-regarded. In their latest research - about the experiences people have of commissioning and being commissioned - there is the opportunity for the residential voice to be heard and represented in the publication.

The invitation is for a manager and an owner or representative to discuss experiences of social care provision, commissioning, and decision-making.

It is a chance to ensure that the research has residential 'know-how' represented and the reality of residential life, rather than how people think it may be.

If you are interested, please let us know.

RELEVANT READS

- **Los Angeles National Centre for Child Traumatic Stress**

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network have published a useful paper enabling people to look beyond simply using ACE scores to assess the severity of need of children and young people. See [here](#).

- **Nuffield Family Justice Observatory**

Read about prioritising empathy over efficiency to transform the futures of unaccompanied asylum seeking children [here](#).

Therapeutic Child Care - What is it?

TCC has a clear psychosocial practice model is applied and understood at all levels of the organisation.

Caregivers can describe the stated practice model, receive training in it, and can demonstrate its application in their practice.

The service has leadership that is appropriately qualified and functions in a way that is consistent with the stated practice

The physical environment is planned and adapted to meet the purposes identified in the practice model.

There are structures and routines in place that maintain the psychosocial model of practice and young people are active participants in the therapeutic environment.

The service also places an importance on building relationships and a sense of belonging. In addition, physical interventions delivered by appropriately trained caregivers are planned and engaged with proactively in accordance with the psychosocial model.

TCC encourages play and playfulness, and the caregivers and young people are actively involved in the process of moving to and from the service.

External relationships are sought and valued and the service uses data to measure progress, achievements, and placement objectives, and analyses these continually.

The Therapeutic / Clinical Governance structures ensure professional oversight of therapeutic planning and delivery and provide credible and objective oversight of the therapeutic model.

Also, the safe use of internet, email and social media is reflected on and supported in line with the psychosocial practice model. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion informs the psychosocial model and service practices.

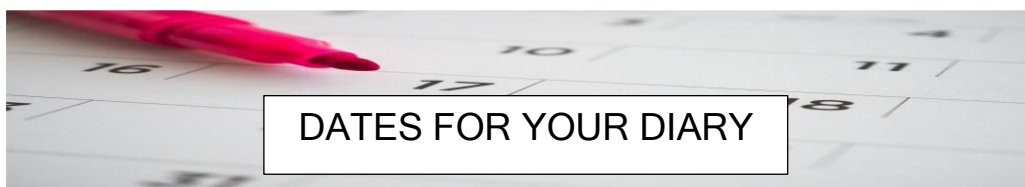
Therapeutic Child Care Standards

These are essential for providers and commissioners to know...

Many residential and foster care services describe themselves as offering therapeutic care but there has been no agreed standard available to allow comparisons between services or to confirm efficacy.

The final version has just been published and can be read [here](#).

The standards cover the following topics: • Statement of Principles and Practice (Practice Model) • Relational Leadership and Management • Caregivers • Therapeutic/Care Plan and Framework • The Physical Environment • Building Relationships and Belonging • Physical Intervention • Therapeutic Governance and External Relations • Social Media • Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).



Conferences

Institute of Recovery from Childhood Trauma, Friday 12th September 2025, 10am - 2pm, Committee Room 1, House of Lords

International Contextual Safeguarding Conference

Association of Child Protection Professionals, 17-18th September, 9:30-5:30pm, Durham

Adolescents in care – Needs, pathways and engagement in multiple and interacting systems

Rees Centre webinar, 28th October 2025, 12:30-1:30pm

Developing the Residential Workforce

FEVACA, Friday 14th November 2025, 8am-4:30pm, Cambridge

Know of others? Tell us!



A thought to finish

Minding our language

Lots of people have helpfully written about the importance of language in 'the care system' and in particular how that can impact on children and young people. Some of that work is excellent and has highlighted a hugely important issue.

The following encourage practitioners to reflect on why they use the language that they do, understand the implications of that language, and make informed decisions based on a set of principles, and dependent upon the context in which they are speaking or writing.

[Why language matters – Rewriting social care](#)

[The power of language in children's social services | Banya](#)

[Changing the language and the way we talk about children in care - Surrey County Council](#)

[Preferred terminology for care-experienced young people - Surrey County Council](#)

[Language that cares guide](#)

[Language in fostering | Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers](#)



Thank you for reading our newsletter, your feedback would be very welcome. If you wish to be removed from the distribution or wish to add a colleague, please email us:

SLI Programme mailbox: EasternRegionCIB@norfolk.gov.uk

SLI website: [Commission East – Improvement East](#)

Linked In: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/improvement-east/>

The next ECCRN meeting is being held on Teams on Thursday, 2 October – 10.30 – 12.30