

Action for Children's calls for the next UK government

Action for Children

Children in care: Reform the care system to support children and young people to thrive

1. Capital investment to alleviate the care placement sufficiency crisis
2. National 'reunification' guidance to support more children to successfully return home from care
3. Targeted support for young people leaving care transitioning to independent living

Early help: Ensure every child and family gets the support they need at the earliest opportunity

Introduce a legal duty on local authorities to provide early help, backed by significant funding. That should include:

1. A sufficient universal offer which includes digital support
2. Targeted support for families experiencing multiple challenges
3. Integrated services so there's 'one front door'
4. Specialist provision for older children, such as mental health support and protection from harm outside the home, including exploitation

Criminal exploitation of children: Keep children safe from exploitation and support victims to rebuild their lives

1. A single, cohesive legal code designed to tackle the criminal exploitation of children, which ensures the rights of children whilst giving new powers to sanction exploiters
2. Coordinated policy and practice at a local and national level, led by a national strategy from UK government
3. Sustainable and ring-fenced investment in early intervention and prevention services for exploited young people

Child poverty: Ensure all children have the essentials they need to thrive, and their families are not held back by barriers to work and opportunity

1. Fix the basic adequacy of social security by increasing the child element of Universal Credit and scrapping the benefit cap and two-child limit
2. Support families to overcome work barriers by:
 - introducing a second earner's work allowance in Universal Credit and fixing Carer's Allowance
 - expanding childcare support and strengthening employment protections to improve job quality and security
 - investing in personalised job support and launching an independent review of DWP policies and culture

None of these issues can be tackled in isolation. In coalition with Barnardo's, National Children's Bureau, NSPCC and The Children's Society, our Children at the Table campaign calls for:

1. An ambitious cross-Government strategy and outcomes framework, to improve the lives of babies, children and young people
2. A new approach to decision-making that places children's needs at its heart and genuinely involves the voices of children and young people
3. Investing more of our national wealth in children, and spending strategically on early intervention and prevention

To find out more, contact rachel.allison@actionforchildren.org.uk or head to [actionforchildren.org.uk/PolicyCalls](https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/PolicyCalls)