

Response ID ANON-3XZA-3MSP-9

Submitted to Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard
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Privacy Notice

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:
Richard Crellin

2 What is your email address?

Email:
r.b.crellin@gmail.com

3 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?

Charity

If 'Other', or you want to provide more details, please state below:

4 We know that some individuals will respond on behalf of their organisation.

Yes

Organisation:
Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium

5 As government analyses the consultation findings and develops and publishes a response, we may want to quote you.

Yes, by organisation

Yes

6 In processing your data and meeting legal duties, government may be expected to share information about your consultation response.

Please explain why you wish your response to be kept confidential:

General National Framework and Dashboard questions

7 To support local authorities in delivering the outcomes and enablers set out in the National Framework we have sought to make the document user-friendly and easy to understand. We have tried to be concise, use plain language and provide clear explanations of what is required of leaders and practitioners.

No opinion

8 What do you think of the expectations for practice described in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on the expectations in the Framework:

The principles could be improved in two ways.

We recommend an explicit reference to children's best interests. 'Children's best interests' is well enshrined in law and understood by practitioners. It goes beyond the idea of "welfare to be paramount" and for "feelings to be sought, heard and responded to".

In the final principle, referring to social care practice being "poverty-aware and anti-discriminatory" we recommend reference is made to immigration status, either explicitly or in any definition of what it means to be anti-discriminatory. This is because of the challenges children face when their immigration status is not recognised.

9 The National Framework describes the role of children's social care in achieving outcomes for children, young people and families. Existing statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), describes the expectations for how other agencies, such as education, health and the police, should meet their duties to work with local authorities, and safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It would not be appropriate to duplicate content across both pieces of guidance, but it is important that the National Framework reflects the importance of multi-agency working.

Please provide your thoughts on the expectations for multi-agency working:

The role of the voluntary and community sector is only very briefly acknowledged in the National Framework. However, it plays a critical role in offering support to children and families who are receiving support from children's social care.

This is particularly true for families and children who are subject to immigration control who can often only receive the specialist support they require to address their immigration status, or migration trauma through the voluntary and community sector.

The role of the voluntary sector should be referenced within the Principles section on partner agencies – the use of the term agencies can be interpreted as referring to statutory agencies only.

10 The Dashboard is being created to support learning and bring transparency to the system so that the impact of what happens in practice can be understood. It will contain a series of indicators providing information on what is happening in practice and how the outcomes and enablers described in the National Framework are being achieved.

Please provide your thoughts on the ways the Dashboard can support learning:

The Dashboard indicators should be linked to demographic information to ensure that insights about the outcomes achieved by social care professionals can be understood in relation to key demographic information like gender, ethnicity, family income, different age groups of children, and other important demographic information like special educational needs and disabilities.

As part of this we recommend that the Department include demographic information about children's nationality in the framework. We will not be able to learn and understand how we meet the needs of children subject to immigration control if we do not collect nationality information.

In order to do this however, there must be a secure firewall between children's social care data and the Home Office as nationality data should not be used to target immigration enforcement activity but instead to ensure that all families receive quality social care support regardless of their background.

11 How often should data be published to support learning and understand how practice is making a difference to children, young people and families?

Not Answered

Outcome, enabler and indicator questions

Outcome 1: children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need

12 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please describe your views and limit your response to 200 words:

Where the Framework references that leaders should address the needs of "those living with families with no recourse to public funds, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)", this should be altered to read "children and families subject to immigration control, for example, those living with families with no recourse to public funds and unaccompanied asylum seeking children". This should help to ensure that all children subject to immigration control are properly included and not just the two groups cited given there is a broad range of children subject to immigration control who often come into contact with children's social care.

In the practitioners section the following should be inserted:

"Practitioners should understand the importance of immigration status as both a risk and protective factor in children's development. Practitioners should be able to connect families to quality immigration advice and, when necessary, support them to secure immigration status."

In the section on listening to children an addition should be made to make it clear that provision should always be made for children to share their views in whatever language they are most comfortable and that quality translation and interpreting services should be available.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

- number of families supported who have NRPF conditions should be collected

Outcome 2: children and young people are supported by their family network

13 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this outcome:

Leaders should design services to support families that are immigration aware and have a clear understanding of how supporting families to address any immigration challenges can strengthen a family network and allow children to be supported by their family network throughout their childhood.

Practitioners have the knowledge and skills to recognise when immigration challenges may undermine the strength of a child's family network and are able to confidently connect families with the support they need to resolve any immigration issues, and provide direct support to resolve immigration challenges when necessary.

Children and family voices should be heard in whatever language a child's family feels most comfortable communicating in and quality interpretation and translation services should always be available to ensure this.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

- Number of Kinship Care arrangements where child or carer is subject to immigration control
- Subjective wellbeing of children in kinship care and their carers broken down by key demographics including nationality
- Number of children going missing from kinship care arrangements

Outcome 3: children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes

14 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this outcome:

Leaders should design services that understand and respond to the risks that insecure immigration status can pose to a child's safety both inside and outside their homes.

Leaders should ensure they have a strong multi-agency response to trafficking that responds effectively when children go missing and ensures that children who have been identified as having been, or being at risk of, being trafficked are effectively supported.

Practitioners should have the knowledge and skills to understand and respond to the negative impact of insecure immigration issues that arise in their area of practice in order to ensure they are able to keep children and young people safe inside and outside of their home.

Practitioners should be able to identify children who have been or are at risk of being trafficked and know how to respond effectively to keep them safe and to ensure that they receive the support they are entitled to.

Children and family voices should be heard in whatever language a child's family feels most comfortable communicating in and quality interpretation and translation services should always be available to ensure this.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

- Number of children going missing from home and care
- Number of children referred to the NRM, number found to have been trafficked, all broken down by British and other nationals.

Outcome 4: children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

15 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this outcome which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this outcome:

Leaders ensure that the immigration needs of children in care are quickly identified and addressed/resolved.

Leaders ensure that the immigration needs of care leavers are quickly identified and addressed/resolved. They should ensure that support is never withdrawn from care leavers on the basis of their immigration status.

Leaders should ensure that any age assessment processes are fair and happen swiftly. They should work to embed a culture where children are believed and where they are given the benefit of the doubt in circumstances where age is not well established.

Practitioners should be able to identify any immigration needs of children in care, include these in their plans, and ensure that they are quickly and efficiently addressed in the long term best interests of a child.

Care leavers should be supported to resolve any immigration challenges they face as quickly as possible and in their long-term best interests.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

- All outcomes should be able to be broken down to understand how many unaccompanied asylum seeking children are achieving each outcome
- Nationality of all children in care
- % living in supported accommodation

- % who feel safe in their placement

- % who feel happy in their placement

- Subjective wellbeing scores for all children in care

Enabler 1: the workforce is equipped and effective

16 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this indicator which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this enabler:

In both the leadership and practitioner statements we would like to see reference to a workforce that is immigration-aware and able to respond confidently and effectively to immigration issues. Leaders and practitioners should receive training so they have sufficient knowledge and skills to be confident they are providing quality support to all children and families subject to immigration control.

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :

Enabler 2: leaders drive conditions for effective practice

17 a. Are there any other ways leaders and practitioners should work towards this indicator which are not specified in the National Framework?

Please provide your thoughts on this enabler:

Please provide your thoughts on the indicators :