

The Fostering Network Wales
Consultation Response to LCO Vulnerable Children

November 2007

The Fostering Network Wales welcomes the development of a legislative competency order relating to vulnerable children and child poverty. 75% of Children in Care in Wales are cared for by foster carers. Therefore to improve outcomes for children in care we have to improve foster care.

The LCO appears wide enough to allow measures to be brought forward for the issues that The Fostering Network has identified through research and consultation as crucial to improve outcomes for children looked after, which are:

- Support to develop foster carers through training, education and skills development.
- Support for care leavers.
- Support for children on the edge of care, so there would be an expectation of preventative work with families to stop children coming into care.
- Education of looked after children and those children on the edge of care, with interventions at key stages of a child's school career and educating foster carers how they might best support children they care for through the education system.
- Family and Friend carers must be supported as they face similar but additional challenges in caring for the children they know.
- Fair and equitable financial support for carers to cover the full financial cost of caring for a child
- Adequate remuneration for experience, skills and knowledge that foster carers need to help children in their care reach their full potential
- Support for carers when allegations are made against them

Q1. Would the terms of the proposed Order allow for the implementation of the policy agenda on vulnerable children and child poverty by means of Measures? If not, how would the proposed Order need to be re-drafted and why?

If this LCO will allow the development of policy around the issues raised in the consultation paper and address the needs of the groups listed above then it does not need redrafting.

Q 2. Are the terms of the proposed Order drafted appropriately, too narrowly or too broadly. If necessary how should the proposed Order be re-drafted and why?

Q 3. Are the definitions of 'well-being' and 'social care' in the proposed Order appropriate? If not, how should they be re-drafted and why?

Point 14 of the Introduction gives a broad definition of 'vulnerable children' that would be useful in the *Interpretation* section.

Definition of young persons needs be to extended to age 25 years.

Needs a definition of 'family' and 'well being'.

Q 4. The proposed Order includes a table setting out certain exceptions from the scope of Matters 15.1-15.8. Are these exceptions appropriate? If not, how should they be re-drafted and why?

The Fostering Network is not aware of any other exceptions that should be included.

The Fostering Network would welcome the opportunity to share with the committee its knowledge and experience of fostering in Wales.