

## [NCB's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care 'Call for Ideas'](#)

### Which category does your idea fall into?

- Family Help and Early Intervention
- Local Authorities
- Stigma
- Child in need and Child Protection
- Workforce – Social Work

### What is your idea? (250 words)

Proportionate pathways to support.

By shifting language to 'pathways to support' we seek to create a less stigmatising narrative.

There are four proposed pathways:

- Advice and information
- Support to continue caring and promote welfare (family help)
- Support to reduce risk
- Support to prevent significant harm

At each level support should be available to both the child and the family.

To identify the pathway an information gathering (assessment) approach is required. This should be one assessment with a series of decision-making points that can fulfil the requirements of a family support conversation; Early Help framework assessment; Section 17 assessment; and section 47 enquiry. Each decision-making point corresponds with a pathway to support and the information gathered to inform that decision is shared as the referral to the subsequent pathway.

Information across the pathways may be contributed to by several practitioners but will form one coherent assessment leading to the relevant plan and provision. For example:

- information gathered by school leads to advice and information and is shared as a referral for family help
- Family help practitioner gathers information building on that provided
- next decision-making point establishes that the pathway for support to continue caring and promote welfare is appropriate leading to a family support plan/provision.
- Where additional need is identified and support is required to reduce risk provision identified in the family help pathway should be put in place and information referred to LA social care

- leading to further information gathering and a child in need or child protection plan/provision

### **What impact do you hope this will achieve? (200 words)**

Where needs are met early through accessible pathways we believe families can be supported to stay together, children can stay safe in their communities. In addition, it can be identified more effectively where it is safest for children to become looked after. Through shifting language and creating a more proportionate approach we hope to reduce stigma for families enabling earlier engagement with pathways to support, preventing avoidable crisis and ensuring social work capacity is retained for the most complex family support.

The proportionate approach creates a continuum of provision enabling local authorities to step families between the pathways of support preventing children leap frogging through the system and missing out on vital interventions along the way e.g. many disabled children and their families only become known to social care services during crisis sometimes moving rapidly from child in need to LAC but by-passing the current Early Help framework and being underrepresented in child protection plans. With this proportionate model there will be less stigma, children and families will be encouraged to ask for help at the right time preventing avoidable crisis and enabling provision across the pathways to support families while they participate in information gathering in subsequent pathways.