



## Response to Government Children's Social Care Policy – November 2024

Practice Charity The Consortium for Therapeutic Communities supports the announcement this week by Bridget Phillipson and the Department for Education on the need for reform in how children's social care settings are planned for and accessed. We have been campaigning for these reforms for some time now – especially around the need for much more robust and diverse practice governance to respond to the underlying sufficiency crisis which drives this issue.

We are delighted to be working already with a growing number of local authorities, individually and in clusters to help them better plan and make use of the registered residential homes for children. Increasingly the demand for services is growing in volume, but importantly in the complexity of need, thus requiring a much more demanding focus on evidence-based practice and diversity in the shapes and sizes of settings across the UK. We are also pleased to be supporting the work of the Nuffield Family Observatory in its work specifically looking at reducing the use of DoLS and tackling this inappropriate use of unregulated settings or supported accommodation.

At TCTC we also support our member organisations, many of whom have been operating specialist services for many years, to help sustain their practice, sharing evidence and contributing to service and quality improvement work across the sector. It is of note that our membership grows year on year as more providers seek to develop and strengthen their practice delivery in response to the changing profile of children's needs.

Local authorities require much greater investment to support the vital family support and early intervention work that will reduce the demand across the system, and we hope the government will commit to funding this. At the same time there must be a focus on commissioning reform based on the long and rich evidence base for therapeutic practice that we have in the UK. This reform on the supply side of children's services is essential and has little to do with the status of the provider, and everything to do with a technical understanding of relationships, trauma and children's needs.

We remain committed to helping commissioners in strengthening their planning and commissioning of therapeutic care, and in supporting value-based providers to deliver high quality, specialist practice.

Dr Chris Nicholson

TCTC Chair