# England's Children: a manifesto

For support to use this manifesto or amplify your own campaigning for children, visit www.englandschildren.org.uk

It's time to put...

**Justice** 

For all children and young people

Develop a 10 year crossdepartmental vision and national strategy for children which includes an outcomes framework, with clear senior Ministerial leadership and accountability

Make all children's rights under the UNCRC enforceable in **English courts by** incorporating the UNCRC

Ensure that all children and young people have access to justice through the provision of legal aid, and appropriate skilled advocacy and advice, whenever they need it

Reduce significantly the number of children living in poverty (in both in-work and out-of-work households) in each consecutive year over the next parliament

End the exclusion of children from the legal right to protection against age discrimination

Benefits and Housing

**Early Years** 

Families and Family Life

**Looked After** Children

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Health

Refugees and Migrants

**Schools** 

Youth

FACT:

We need to...

Scrap the social rented sector size criteria ('bedroom tax') and uprate Local Housing Allowance rates in line with local rental inflation to ensure all families can live in affordable homes

FACT: There are 3.5 million children living in poverty in the UK today. That's 27% of children, or more than one in four

Pensions, 2013

Remove Child Benefit from the benefit cap

Sustainably fund schemes of local welfare provision for families in emergency needs

# We need to...

Move funding to the early years and weight this funding towards the most disadvantaged children in recognition that the first years in a person's life are the most critical

FACT: Only 48% of 5 year entitled to free school have a good level of development at the end of their reception year, compared to 67% of all other pupils www.barnardos.org.uk

Introduce free, flexible, universal childcare from the end of parental leave until school starting age

Develop a comprehensive, evidence-based early years strategy that covers aims and approaches, funding and CPD

**FACT: 330,205** children received food from a Trussell Trust food bank from April 2013 - March 2014



# We need to...

Invest in transforming children's centres into 'Family Hubs' that provide access to integrated local family services

Subject all new government policies to a "Family Test" that assesses the impact of any initiative on family income, stability and wellbeing

Fund flexible universal childcare for those aged

#### We need to...

Ensure that all young people have the option to remain in their placement, whatever the placement is, until the age of 21 with support guaranteed until the age of 25

**FACT:** There are over 68,000 children looked after by a carer who isn't their parent. Around half have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural health

(Department for Education, 2013)

Place a duty on local authorities to conduct a needs analysis of their looked after children population and publish a strategy for how to match need to placements locally, regionally and nationally

Publish a workforce strategy for delivering a skilled workforce grounded in a thorough understanding of safeguarding, attachment and resilience

#### We need to...

Require local health and wellbeing boards to have a defined focus on the delivery and improvement of services for disabled children

**Exempt families of** disabled children from the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) child room sharing rules and apply the extra room allowance for a nonfamily carer to disabled children

**FACT:** Pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs are nine times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than pupils without Special **Educational Needs** (Department for Education, 2012)

Develop a programme to provide a cross-Government platform for the voice of disabled children and children with SEN or additional needs in decision-making

#### **FACT: 1 in 10**

children aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder or around three children in every class



# We need to...

Develop a comprehensive strategy to deliver a universal, nonstigmatising positive mental health programme in children's centres and schools with clear pathways to targeted

Develop a 10 year strategy for the integration of health. social care and education services, based on individual case worker-led approaches

Ban the sale and consumption of energy drinks on school premises

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#### We need to...

Ensure that all children and young people have effective access to justice through the provision of civil legal aid when they need it and regardless of their residence or immigration status

Develop and implement digital age a strategy for dealing FACT: Only 3% of with unaccompanied teachers said their migrant children and teacher training young people to ensure equipped them to teach that their protection. Sex and Relationships development and longterm best interests are protected, and led by the Department responsible for safeguarding and protecting all children

**FACT:** Support for children and families seeking asylum in the UK is less than half of mainstream benefits. leaving around 10,000 children in poverty who have sought safety here (www.childrenssociety.org.uk

forced destitution and homelessness policies and enable all children and families who have international protection needs or cannot leave the UK to access employment, cash-based support and housing to ensure children's welfare is promoted

End the use of

#### We need to... We need to...

Mandate an age Place a duty on anyone arresting or detaining an appropriate Sex and Relationship Education adult to ask, report and (SRE) programme for take action if the adult is all school age children, a primary carer and if a child will be left without grounded in the context of social and emotional immediate care as a result education for all children of their arrest or detention and relevant for the

Require courts to take into account a family impact statement at the time of sentencing and provide funding to support families to produce these in all instances in which custody is being considered

**FACT: Approximately** 

200,000 children

in England and Wales

have a parent in prison.

They're twice as likely to

experience conduct and

mental health problems,

and less likely to do well

(www.barnardos.org.uk)



Introduce directly-elected Strategic Education Commissioners as a new 'middle tier' who have responsibility for ensuring sufficient school capacity through the provision of places and training teachers, school improvement and will act as the appeal body for issues related to

Ensure that all children have access to schoolbased emotional and mental health support



of criminal responsibility so that children are only incarcerated where there is evidence that there is a risk of substantial harm to themselves or others

### As of August 2014, 886,000 young people were unemployed. 28% of them had been unemployed for over a year



# We need to...

Fund high quality face-to-face careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for all young people

Give 16 and 17 year olds the vote in all public elections

Increase the National Minimum Wage rate for those aged under 21 to the same level as those aged 21 and over



This manifesto was developed by Children England's members, who are charities working with and for children and their families all over England. With a uniquely democratic process in which each organisation's voice counts equally, the manifesto offers a strong, clear voice and set of priorities to influence policy and debate, both locally and nationally, in the run up to the General Election in 2015 and beyond. For more information, visit www.childrenengland.org.uk



Charities working for children and families