

Written Ministerial Statement

A child-centred system **The Government's response to the Munro review of child protection**

On 10th June 2010, I informed the house that the Government was commissioning the Munro review of child protection. This was the very first review established in the Department for Education, underlining the enormous priority this Government places on getting child protection right.

From the start, we wanted the Munro Review of Child Protection to be different. That is why, unlike its predecessors, it was not commissioned as an immediate response to a specific crisis. That is why Professor Munro's final report – published in May - recommended that regulation and prescription are reduced rather than increased. And – most importantly of all – that is why it focused on the child, rather than the system.

I am extremely grateful to Professor Munro for undertaking a wide-ranging and in-depth review. I am also grateful to all the organisations in the sector, the child protection workforce and the wider public, including children and young people themselves, who contributed to the review. Their experience, insights and expertise have helped make her final report so well informed, and so widely welcomed.

Just as Professor Munro conducted her review openly and collaboratively, the Government has worked with the sector to develop the Government's response. An Implementation Working Group, drawing on expertise from local authority children's services, the social work profession, the police and, in particular, education and the health service, advised on the Government's response to Professor Munro's recommendations.

The Government commends Professor Munro's thorough analysis of the issues and accepts her fundamental argument that the child protection system has lost its focus on the thing that matters most: the views and experience of children themselves. We believe we need to move towards a child protection system with less central prescription and interference, where we place greater trust and responsibility in skilled professionals at the front line.

The Government's response is not a one-off set of recommended solutions to be imposed from the centre. Rather it is the start of a shift in mindset and relationship between central Government, local agencies and frontline professionals, working in partnership. Change will evolve and best practice will develop based on experience, innovation and evidence. Our aim will be to create the conditions for sustained, long term reform which enables and inspires professionals to do their best for vulnerable children and their families.

Professor Munro will continue to advise the Government and will undertake an interim assessment of progress in Spring 2012. I have placed copies of the Government's response in the House libraries.