What does the Children and Young People Bill include for looked after children?

Extending the age to which care leavers can receive support from their local authority.

This means...

Young people who have been in care will be able to ask local authorities for support until they turn 26. If a young person who has been in care asks their local authority for support and assistance, the local authority will have to assess their needs. If they find that the young person has eligible needs, and the needs can’t be met elsewhere, they must offer support.

Supporting kinship carers and families.

This means...

A kinship carer is a relative or friend who takes over caring for a child when their parents cannot look after them. The changes in the Bill are being made to encourage more people to become kinship carers so that fewer children become looked after.

Eligible kinship carers will get help and advice if they apply for, or are considering applying for, a kinship care order, and will get enhanced support, when they get, or are subject to a kinship care order. A kinship care order is an order made under section 11 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

Local authorities will also make sure that families who seek help because they are having difficulties can get appropriate forms of support.

These changes will help families deal with issues that, if left, could lead to a child becoming looked after.

High quality support

We want Scotland to have a care system that gives children and young people high quality support, focussed on their long and short term needs.

- Read more about Looked after children
Defining corporate parenting and the public bodies to which this applies.

This means...

If a child is looked after, the local authority responsible for their care is called their corporate parent.

Corporate parenting is how we define the way services work together to help children who are looked after or leaving care. The Bill sets out the responsibilities that these services will have to carry out so everyone understands how to be good corporate parents.

The Bill says which services are corporate parents and says they have to plan and report on how they are working together to be corporate parents.

Putting Scotland’s National Adoption Register on a statutory footing.

This means...

Scotland’s National Adoption Register service was set up in 2011 and is designed to increase numbers of adoptions and speed up the process, once adoption is identified as the best way forward.

The new law will make it a legal requirement for all councils and adoption agencies to provide information to the Register to help make sure children are matched with the right families as soon as possible. Ministers will be legally responsible for establishing and maintaining the register.