



# **Business Plan 2014–15**

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## Who we are and what we do

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) is a national statutory organisation led by the Children's Commissioner for England, Dr Maggie Atkinson. We promote and protect children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and, as appropriate, other human rights legislation and conventions.

We do this by listening to what children and young people say about things that affect them and encouraging adults making decisions to take their views and interests into account.

We publish evidence, including that which we collect directly from children and young people, bringing matters that affect their rights to the attention of Parliament, the media, children and young people themselves, and society at large. We also provide advice on children's rights to policy-makers, practitioners and others.

The post of Children's Commissioner for England was established by the Children Act 2004. The Act makes us responsible for working on behalf of all children in England and in particular, those whose voices are least likely to be heard. It says we must speak for wider groups of children on the issues that are not-devolved to regional Governments. These include immigration, for the whole of the UK, and youth justice, for England and Wales.

The Children and Families Act 2014 changed the Children's Commissioner's remit and role. It provided the legal mandate for the Commissioner and those who work in support of her remit at the OCC to promote and protect children's rights. In particular, we are expected to focus on the rights of children within the new section 8A of the Children Act 2004, or other groups of children whom we consider are at particular risk of having their rights infringed. This includes those who are in or leaving care or living away from home, and those receiving social care services. The Act also allows us to provide advice and assistance to and to represent these children.

## Our vision

A society where children's and young people's rights are realised, where their views shape decisions made about their lives and they respect the rights of others.

## Our mission

We promote and protect the rights of children in England. We will do this by involving children and young people in our work and ensuring their voices are heard. We use our statutory powers to undertake research, investigations and inquiries, and our statutory position to engage, advise and influence those who make decisions that affect children and young people.

## Our values

**Participation** – we listen to children, particularly those least likely to be heard, and take their views seriously.

**Positive in promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** – we are positive in responding to challenges and opportunities to use the UNCRC to improve children's lives.

**Strategic and objective** – we know the big picture. We think about how best to make an impact, basing our work on rigorous analysis of the evidence; remaining free of political partiality, working in the spirit of the Paris Principles and General Comment No 2 of the UNCRC.

**Equality** – we value diversity and respect the dignity of everyone with whom we engage. We acknowledge, champion and celebrate diversity, difference, tolerance and open mindedness. We recognise the multitude of views and perspectives held by children, young people, and those who influence their lives.

## Foreword from Amplify

Amplify looks forward to continuing to advise the Children's Commissioner when her role and that of the Office of the Children's Commissioner is strengthened.

I believe the work set out in this Business Plan will make sure OCC continues to help build a society where children and young people's rights are realised and where their views shape decisions made about their lives and they respect the rights of others.

In everything the OCC does, young people are at the very heart of their decision-making and Amplify's 29 members exemplify this approach.

This year, Amplify published, *"What we say we need": a report on the important items, opportunities and aspirations for all children and young people*. Everything in this report, from the original idea to research what children and young people think is needed to achieve their dreams, to procuring a company to design an online questionnaire, was led by Amplify. Working in partnership with OCC staff, Amplify members promoted the questionnaire and succeeded in getting 1,300 children and young people to complete it. We aim to build on this success next year with the establishment of a new project targeting an issue that affects young people across the stretch of England.

At Amplify's last residential meeting, many areas of interest and importance to young people were whittled down to a single topic. A consensus was reached by the group to look at the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people, an issue which I personally believe affects a large proportion of children and young people, not just in my local area but all across England. From the successes of our aspirations project, I strongly believe that our project on emotional wellbeing and mental health will make real and positive change happen.

On top of this, Amplify members have been involved in working group meetings throughout the last year, supporting OCC staff on many key projects. Many of us have also been on interview panels when commissioning new pieces of work and for prospective new staff members. We look forward to this continuing in to 2014/15.

I am excited that "Young Amplify" an idea that spawned out of an Amplify meeting, will be going ahead in full flow, this will ensure that children between the ages of 7-11 will have a voice and directly feed into the OCC's work .

Following the success of last year's Takeover Day, I have already put Friday 21 November 2014 into my diary, as I wouldn't want to miss it. Tens of thousands of children took part in the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Day, and it really gives children and young people from all backgrounds and all abilities the chance to get involved in decision making and work with adults for the day. Those who took part ranged from senior MPs to nurses on a local children's ward and what I love about the day is not only the insight it gives a young person into their aspirations, which relates to our report, but it also raises awareness of the Children's Commissioner and the office. In addition it promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to young people and in particular Article 12 which says that young people have a right to say what they think and to have their views taken into account.

I hope you enjoy reading the OCC's Business Plan.

**Vikram**  
**Member of Amplify**

## Foreword from the Children's Commissioner

I am delighted to publish the Office of the Children's Commissioner's (OCC's) 2014–15 Business Plan. It is an ambitious programme of work for the year ahead, which seeks to promote and protect children's rights, in particular those of the most vulnerable, marginalised and otherwise unheard.

I and all those working for the OCC are looking forward to a newly strengthened statutory remit and role, taking on additional responsibilities outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014.

This plan represents the work to be done at this milestone moment in the OCC's development. We have been anticipating and planning for the changes to come for many months. We are excited by the opportunities the reforms present to enable the Children's Commissioner for England, from this year onwards, to promote and protect children's rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other vital instruments, and to highlight where we may fail to realise those rights for our children. As 2015 will mark the tenth anniversary of this Office, it is fitting that this plan shows both what we already achieve and our ambitions for children and young people in the coming year.

The Plan has been written more collaboratively than any of our previous Business Plans. We have involved many children, adults and organisations in its development, consulting widely on its content and focus both before it was written, and during its production. As a result, we are confident that the work it sets out harnesses my statutory powers as Children's Commissioner to their fullest, focusing OCC's attention on areas and issues where our presence is necessary, and where what we do is likely to be the most impactful. We are also confident that from the 1 April 2014, we will have the people, structures and processes in place to fulfil our new remit.

Much of the work proposed in the plan will be delivered in partnership with others. Although we are the only national statutory body that is specifically tasked with promoting and protecting children's rights and for this reason, must retain a degree of independence, there are many organisations doing important work to ensure children enjoy their rights and wherever possible, we work with others to pursue shared aims whilst maintaining our independence.

Some of the projects included in this Plan continue the work we have been doing so effectively for a number of years. In it, you will see that we will continue to work on children's rights to: education; access to health services; protection from all forms of harm; to have an adequate standard of living to lead a dignified and purposeful life; and to be listened to and have their views taken seriously, including through complaints systems. We are also continuing to promote the rights of children in the asylum and immigration system, and those in conflict with the law.

A strong focus of the OCC's work in 2014–15 will be on children and young people who will fall within the new Section 8A of the Children Act 2004 (as inserted by clause 105 of the Children and Families Act 2014). This group includes those who are in or leaving care or living away from home, and those receiving social care services. We will create a new Care and Protection team to support our work in this area, which will include the provision of advice and assistance to individual children who fall within this category. This will build on and further develop the Office of the Children's Rights Director's work over the past 13 years, as well as our own considerable work to date with these children and young people.

This plan expresses, in concrete terms, our unswerving determination to help improve

children's lives through the promotion and protection of their rights. In doing this, we are acutely aware that we must use every penny of the public money we are allocated wisely, and in accordance with regulations governing public expenditure. In past years we have met the challenge of continuously decreasing budgets by refocusing resources into project and policy work and reducing our back office expenditure. We plan to continue along this path, and are strengthening the ways in which we measure the impact of our work to help ensure better value for money. You will find this determination is a feature of this Plan.

We are a comparatively small team, especially given that England's population of under-18 year olds is 25% of the whole nation, and that if they have been in care or are disabled, we have them in our remit until they are 25. We are as effective as we are because we are an able and committed team, as well as being tenacious in pursuing our common goal: the realisation of children's rights. I am privileged to lead such a dedicated staff team, and I thank them for all they do, through the OCC and in support of my remit, for England's children and young people.

Inevitably, the Plan cannot capture in detail every area in which I or members of the OCC team will be involved in the year ahead. We regularly address gatherings of professionals, academics and policymakers and meet children and young people and those who work with them. We sit on a number of policy fora, including Ministerial groups, bringing to them the rights and perspectives of children and young people. Such work is vital to the fulfilment of my remit, whether or not it is related to specific projects in the plan.

During the course of my work I meet many children and young people and I never cease to be amazed by their achievements nor moved by some of the stories I hear. It remains a privilege to be able to champion their rights and work on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ME Atkinson', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

**Dr Maggie Atkinson**  
**Children's Commissioner for England**

## Introduction

This Business Plan sets out how we will promote and protect children and young people's rights during 2014–15. It has been developed in anticipation of reforms to the Children's Commissioner's statutory remit and role set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Since 2011–12, when we were tasked with doing so by the Secretary of State for Education, we have been working in the spirit of the recommendations made by John Dunford following his 2010 review of our role and remit. In particular, we have focused on promoting and protecting the rights of children as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Children's Commissioner's statutory duties and functions are defined in Part 1 and Schedule 1 of the Children Act 2004 as amended in Part 6 and Schedule 5 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Children and Families Act 2014 strengthens our primary function by tasking us with promoting and protecting the rights of children in England. It also makes us responsible for work for which the Children's Rights Director has had responsibility: promoting the rights of children who are looked after, living away from home or receiving social care services. It says we should have particular regard to the rights of these groups of children, and that we may also provide them with individual advice, assistance and representation.

### **A successful year**

During 2013–14 a number of projects we had initiated in previous years came to fruition with the publication of high profile and impactful reports. These included: national inquiries into school exclusions and children who are sexually exploited in gangs and groups; a child rights impact assessment of budget decisions and benefit reforms; good practice guidelines for child protection and safeguarding in secondary schools; common principles for child friendly complaint processes; a rights-based analysis of disabled children's experiences of living in low income families; and a report by Amplify, the Children's Commissioner's young advisory group, on the important items and opportunities young people say they need.

In addition to making and following through recommendations in our reports, at the time of writing, our work has included: responding to 30 statutory consultations; addressing 441 requests for advice from individuals and organisations on children's rights issues and a further 210 general enquiries; and acting as interested parties in two legal cases relating to asylum. Throughout the year, we have worked closely with a wide range of children's sector organisations, whilst necessarily maintaining our independence. This included working with the Children's Rights Director and his staff, to plan for the proposed transfer of his functions to the Office of the Children's Commissioner and strengthening our network of organisations that champion children's participation.

Both the adequacy and effectiveness of our plan for the transition to our proposed new remit were reviewed by our independent internal auditors receiving 'full' assurance assessments, which underlines our confidence that we are well prepared to take on our new duties. We continued to improve our efficiency, meeting budget reductions by further refocusing resources away from back office functions and towards project work. We are tracking and monitoring our impact and will provide a full assessment of it in our forthcoming annual report.

## The year ahead

Our plans for the year ahead are ambitious and challenging, continuing both our unwavering pressure on, and constructive policy and practice advice to, the Government, statutory agencies and wider society, seeking to promote and end violations of children's and young people's rights in England. We recognise that to deliver it successfully, we must both command the confidence of our partners and engage widely and effectively with all who share these aims.

In accordance with our new statutory role, we will create a new Care and Protection team, committing at least the same level of resource as is currently deployed to deliver our advice, assistance and representation role. This team will assume many of the responsibilities formerly carried out by the Office of the Children's Rights Director, further developing this work. In addition to providing advice, assistance and representation to children living away from home and strategic policy work to promote and protect their rights, the Office will also be responsible for responding to enquires from adults who approach the OCC on behalf of individuals or groups who fall within this same definition.

Our work on education continues, with investigations into the impact of policy reforms on education, and complaints in the education system.

We will be following through the recommendations of our Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, including piloting the *See Me, Hear Me Framework* which outlines the functions and processes needed to form a holistic response to sexual exploitation at a local level, across three local authorities. We will also begin an investigation into the prevalence of child sexual abuse and barriers to its recognition and treatment. This will commence with a rapid evidence assessment of the current state of knowledge regarding intrafamilial child sexual abuse.

We will be researching local housing, health and education provision to determine the role they play in alleviating poverty for families with children under the age of five.

We will undertake Child Rights Impact Assessments on at least two aspects of policy, including fiscal policy and budgetary measures.

We will publish a research strategy and strengthen links with academic institutions which share our interest in and work on children's rights.

We are conscious of the work done by and will continue working purposefully with, the Children's Commissioners and their offices in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, whenever our programmes of work and concerns for children and young people's rights are common across the nations of the UK. Wherever we share concerns and can speak and act together without fettering the activity in the other nations, we work and speak together.

Our work for 2014–15 is outlined in greater detail below.

Above all, and in everything we do, we will continue to say what must be said to those with the power to change things for the better for England's children and young people.

## How we identify our priorities

### Identification of priorities and work for 2014–15

This year, we consulted extensively on development of our Business Plan with our proposed new statutory role and remit and our vision, mission and values, providing the framework and focus for its development. In addition, our decision-making took into account:

- concerns raised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations to the UK State Party in 2008, and reiterated in the four UK Children's Commissioner's mid-term report on progress against them, published in November 2011
- the views and experiences of children and young people collected by the Office of the Children's Commissioner and others in the course of our work on all themes
- evidence from research, the work of children's services and others, of where children's rights are not promoted and protected
- the impact of previous work we have carried out, given our knowledge of the capacity and expertise within the organisation
- an assessment of the significance of the difference we can make
- whether our work would duplicate that of other organisations.

### Consultation

To inform the development of this plan we wrote and spoke to a wide range of individuals and organisations, many of which we had worked with before, feeling it vital to seek the input of external audiences in the children's sector, into planning for our reformed office:

- we wrote to 228 voluntary and statutory organisations inviting contributions, 18 of which made 71 suggestions
- we held two roundtables with organisations in the fields of looked after children and children in care, as well as discussions with leading experts
- we ran five consultation events, meeting with organisations including Amplify, the Children's Commissioner's young people's advisory group, The Who Cares? Trust and Voice
- we organised three events with groups of young people representing children in care, care leavers, and children living away from home.

As far as is possible, we hope to have incorporated the information we garnered from the consultation into this plan.

## Our strategic priorities

1. We will promote and protect all children's and young people's rights. We will have particular regard to those within the new section 8A of the Children Act 2004 (children living away from home or receiving social care) who we will provide advice, assistance and representation to. We will also have particular regard to other groups of children who we consider to be at particular risk of having their rights infringed.
2. We will promote and protect children's and young people's rights to access services and support that enable them to develop, flourish and realise their potential.
3. We will promote and protect children's and young people's right to protection from violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation, with particular regard to the most vulnerable groups who are afforded special protection under the UNCRC.
4. We will promote and protect children's and young people's rights to participating, having their views respected, and interests taken seriously, in matters and decisions that affect their lives.
5. We will promote and protect children's and young people's rights through the way we work, and by being an efficient organisation that is flexible and capable of responding with authority and expertise.

Our work across all five of our strategic priorities will reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child's general principles that state:

- everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights outlined in the Convention (Article 1)
- the Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from (Article 2)
- all organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child (Article 3)
- all children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily (Article 6)
- children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously (Article 12).

## Our work to meet the priorities

1. **We will promote and protect all children’s and young people’s rights. We will have particular regard to those within the new section 8A of the Children Act 2004 (children living away from home or receiving social care) who we will provide advice, assistance and representation to. We will also have particular regard to other groups of children who we consider to be at particular risk of having their rights infringed.**

In furthering this strategic priority we will have particular regard to children’s and young people’s right to:

- protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (Article 34)
- protection from injury, violence and neglect (Articles 9, 19 and 37)
- be looked after properly by people who respect their rights if that cannot be done by their own parents (Articles 20 and 21).

Our work under this priority will include:

- 1.1 Establishing a dedicated **Care and Protection team** to lead our work to ensure that children living away from home or receiving care services have their rights promoted and protected
- 1.2 Providing **advice, assistance and representation** to children falling within the new section 8A of the Children Act 2004 (as inserted by clause 105 of the Children and Families Act 2014) including children in care or living away from home in the criminal justice or legal system, mental health facilities, immigration or asylum system or boarding schools face to face, by telephone and via correspondence.
- 1.3 Producing and publishing **Care Monitor**, the annual national survey of children in care, using the data alongside other research commissioned by us to inform strategic work to protect the rights of children in care, as well as making the data available to others.
- 1.4 Securing input from children in care, including care leavers in all aspects of our work through a programme of visits to Children in Care councils, ongoing consultation with young people in care and care leavers supported by voluntary sector organisations and making sure the voices of children in care are represented as part of the Commissioner’s advisory group.
- 1.5 Providing high quality, useful advice, assistance and information to children and young people who fall within this group online via our new website.
- 1.6 Undertaking a programme of visits to residential care settings, the outcomes of which will inform our future work in this area
- 1.7 Contributing our advice and guidance to politicians and policy and practice shapers in both national and local government.

**2. We will promote and protect children’s and young people’s rights to access services and support that enable them to develop, flourish and realise their potential.**

In furthering this strategic priority we will have particular regard to children’s and young people’s rights to:

- an adequate standard of living (Article 27), with extra support from the Government for children in need (Article 26)
- an education (Article 28) that develops their talents and abilities to the full (Article 29) and enables them to access leisure, cultural and artistic, and other wider experiences (Article 31)
- good quality health care (Article 24)
- support for children with a disability so that they can also lead a full and decent life (Article 23).

Our work under this priority will include:

- 2.1 Investigating the impact of low income and **poverty** on children’s rights, and promoting good local practice in tackling poverty in early years. Following our ground-breaking work in 2013–14 on the impact of low income on disabled children’s rights that highlighted the importance of health, housing and education in meeting the needs of children living in poverty, we will undertake a study of local services across these three sectors, analysing the role they play in alleviating poverty for families with children under the age of five.
- 2.2 Providing **opportunities for the young people** who have participated in our work on child poverty to inform and influence policy and practice as we submit evidence to and meet with the Government’s Child Poverty Unit and others working to reduce the numbers of children living in low income.
- 2.3 Examining the impact of policy reforms on **educational outcomes**. This work will draw on both research evidence and the views of children, young people, parents, school and education professionals and other stakeholders who have contributed to our consultation on this issue. Over the coming year, our work will assess the impact that reforms have had on different groups of children, with a focus on the most vulnerable.
- 2.4 Assessing the extent to which **complaints systems** in the schools system are accessible for children and young people. Using the principles for child friendly complaints systems we developed in 2013, our work over the coming year will focus on complaints processes in the schools system, testing the applicability of the principles against good practice across the sector.
- 2.5 Working with children and young people in **residential special schools** to study how these institutions promote and protect their wellbeing. We will find out what matters to the children and young people in these schools, and develop recommendations on the steps that are needed in order to protect their rights and promote their wellbeing.
- 2.6 Tackling **bullying** through supporting the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA). Through chairing the Alliance, the OCC will promote the work of anti-bullying organisations, Anti-Bullying Week in November 2014 and provision of guidance and advice for children, parents and professionals.
- 2.7 Supporting a project led by our young people’s advisory group Amplify on children and

young people with **mental health** problems. Their decision to prioritise this work follows on from the concerns raised by a number of our stakeholders, including groups of children and young people in care and care leavers. Amplify's work will be an important part of the Commissioner's contributions to the Department of Health's Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum and the work of the Chief Medical Officer.

**3. We will promote and protect children's and young people's right to protection, with particular regard to the most vulnerable groups who are afforded special protection under the UNCRC.**

In furthering this strategic priority we will have particular regard to children's and young people's rights to:

- protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (Article 34)
- protection from injury, violence and neglect (Articles 9, 19 and 37)
- fair treatment and respect by the criminal justice and legal system, even when they are placed in detention (Articles 37 and 40)
- special care and support for refugee and asylum seeking children and young people and those who may have been trafficked or subject to immigration controls (Article 22).

Our work under this priority will include:

- 3.1 Realising the recommendations of our two-year Inquiry into **child sexual exploitation in groups and gangs** (CSEGG) published in November 2013. This will include briefings for police, health, local government and voluntary sectors using the substantial body of evidence that we have not yet published.
- 3.2 A major evaluation of pilot areas implementing our **See Me, Hear Me Framework** that seeks to address many of the system shortcomings identified in our Inquiry by forcing professionals to focus relentlessly on the child's needs.
- 3.3 Investigating the prevalence and context of **intrafamilial child sexual abuse** and barriers to recognition and treatment. The work builds on evidence presented to OCC during its Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups and the completion of a rapid evidence assessment of the current state of knowledge regarding intrafamilial child sexual abuse due early in the business year.
- 3.4 Promoting and protecting the rights of refugee and **asylum seeking children and other children subject to immigration control**, especially unaccompanied minors and those who may have been trafficked, appeals rights exhausted young people, and those challenging the assessment of their age. Our work will focus on engaging children and young people who have experience of the system to develop recommendations that address failings in policy, process and provision that result in rights violations.
- 3.5 Visiting institutions where **children and young people are detained or deprived of their liberty**, using our powers of entry and role as chair of the National Preventive Mechanism children and young people's sub-group. This will include the youth justice secure estate, mental health and immigration facilities. We will take up our findings with the relevant local and national bodies and show through our impact register, the way our work has improved conditions and outcomes for these children and young people.

3.6 Presenting the views and experiences of children and young people on the use of **segregation/single separation in youth justice custody**, alongside data on its use and a children's rights analysis.

**4. We will promote and protect children's and young people's rights to participate in and have their views respected and interests taken seriously in matters and decisions that affect their lives.**

In furthering this strategic priority we will have particular regard to children's and young people's right to:

- have a say in all matters affecting them, and have their views taken seriously (Article 12)
- be free to say what they think, seek and receive information and meet with other children and young people (Articles 13 and 15)
- privacy and to have a private life (Article 16)
- Receive reliable information that they can understand from the media (Article 17).

Our work under this priority will include:

- 4.1 Delivering the seventh **Children's Commissioner's Takeover Day** in November 2014, building on the success of engaging over 50,000 children and young people in 2013 to further develop the event as a stage for promoting Article 12 participation rights and securing young people's involvement in decision-making.
- 4.2 Supporting the Children's Commissioner's young people's advisory group **Amplify** to continue to inform and influence the OCC's work. It will do this through providing advice on projects across our business plan, developing its own project on young people's mental health services (1.7 above), and being involved in all of our procurement and recruitment.
- 4.3 Establishing a **Young Amplify** group for children aged seven to 11 to actively to contribute and participate in OCC's work. Young Amplify will be made up of children from across England who are linked to groups that are also part of our wider **Participation Network** that will continue to contribute evidence to our projects.
- 4.4 Developing dedicated participation work with **children in care and living away from home, including care leavers** to support the work of strategic priority four. As well as a programme of visits to children in care and different care settings across England, OCC will use the legacy of the Office of the Children's Rights Director to facilitate opportunities for these groups of children and young people to participate in OCC's work and directly influence the Children's Minister and other policy makers.
- 4.5 Developing a new **OCC work experience programme** that provides young people with an opportunity to experience the range of work carried out by the OCC. We will focus on providing opportunities to those least likely to access similar chances in other organisations.
- 4.6 Evaluating the impact of key government policies and proposals on children's rights by publishing two **Child Rights Impact Assessments** in 2014, and commencing work on two more during the course of the business year.
- 4.7 Exploring what **gender** means in practice for diverse young people in early

adolescence, and how gender and other protected characteristics shape children's enjoyment of their UNCRC rights.

- 4.8 In partnership with Children's Commissioners in the other three UK nations, submitting evidence, in line with the Children's Commissioner's statutory role, to **the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability** (CRPD) in June 2014, and gathering evidence for the joint UK Children's Commissioner's report to the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** in 2015, with aim to inform the UN Committee's report and concluding observations.
- 4.9 Intervening, where appropriate, in **strategic legal cases** to promote children's rights. OCC has developed criteria to assess which cases it will choose to intervene in, and it is expected that we will not be involved in more than two to three cases per year.
- 4.10 Reviewing and improving our communications with children and young people including launching a new website to improve our online engagement and in particular, the way we gather children's views online.

**5. We will promote and protect children's and young people's rights through the way we work, and by being an efficient organisation that is flexible and capable of responding with authority and expertise.**

We will have particular regard to how a national rights institution for children should operate as outlined in UNCRC General Comment 2 and the UN's Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles).

We are also committed to realising the highest standards of governance and probity in public life in order that we make the best possible use of public resources.

Our work under this priority will include:

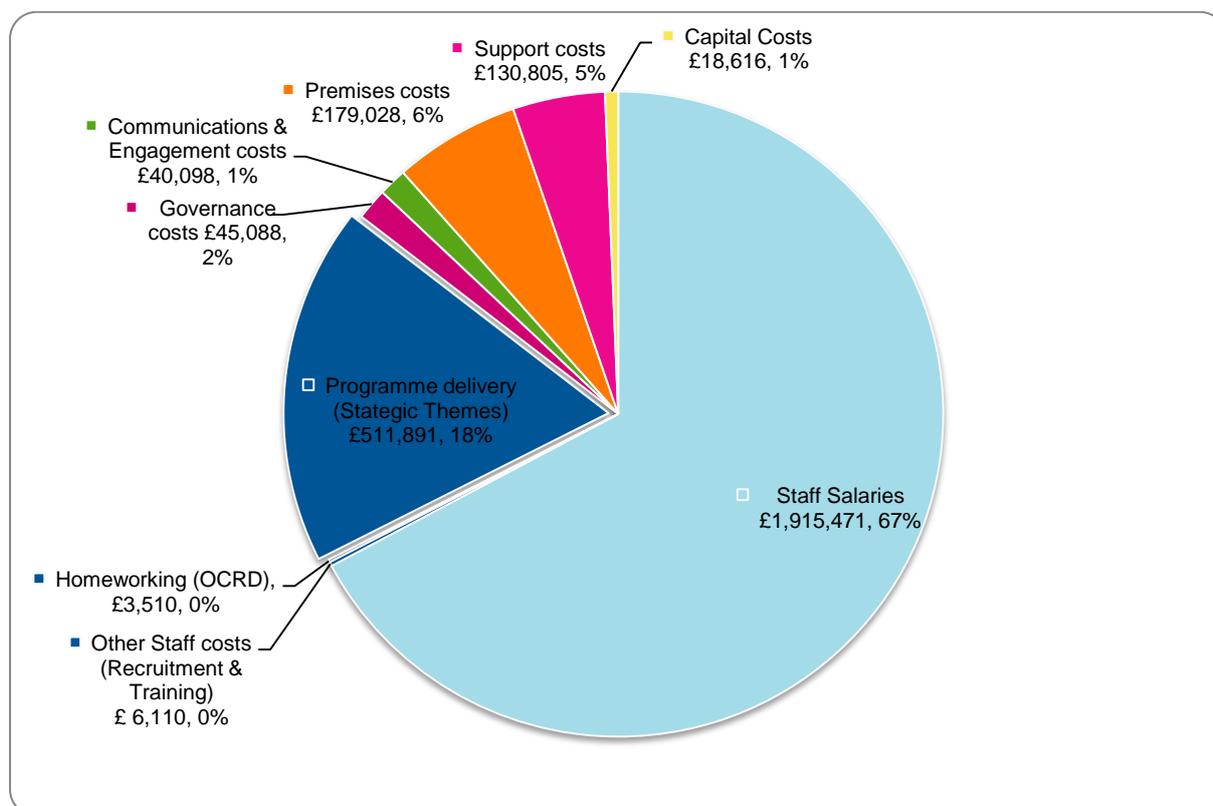
- 5.1 **Responding to consultations**, inquiries and requests for evidence where OCC believes that its evidence, expertise and role in promoting and protecting children's rights will have an impact on their outcomes. In 2013–14 OCC responded to over 30 consultations. We will continue to review the impact such work has to ensure that the organisation's resources are used intelligently.
- 5.2 Ensuring that our projects and work with children and young people is conducted ethically, and effectively through developing and publishing a revised **participation strategy**, new **research strategy** and **data collection plan**. These will set out clearly how we will work and the standards by which we will appraise the work of others.
- 5.3 OCC's **corporate services** will lead on contact with the DfE in a review of OCC's governance. It will also ensure that the OCC implements policies, procedures and ways of working that ensure we are accountable, transparent, have robust governance arrangements, demonstrate good value for money, maximise resources for OCC programmes and projects, and monitor the impact of our work. This team's work will also be completed in support of the Children's Commissioner's status as a Corporation Sole, her role as chair of the statutorily required Advisory Board and Accounting Officer for the OCC.
- 5.4 Strengthening our engagement and communications work through:
  - a) launching and supporting a **new OCC website** to ensure we can better deliver on the new remit through improved online engagement

- b) reviewing our **current communications with children and young people** and recommending and making improvements
  - c) a **bi-monthly newsletter** sent to a range of stakeholders highlighting key projects and work from the previous months and disseminating important information
  - d) reviewing our social media presence and **extending our use of social media** as part of our communications and engagement activity
  - e) launching an **annual stakeholder survey** of the people and organisations we work with to see whether they think we are effective and how we can improve the ways we work with them
  - f) ensuring our work with stakeholders, from politicians to the media and academia, from professional gatherings and conferences to round tables of policymakers and practitioners, and from NGOs to other bodies with a strong interest in our work, is robust, influential, and proven in its reach and effectiveness.
- 5.5 Reviewing and improving the way we write **recommendations**, making sure we are more efficient at tracking them and building in strong performance management principles into the reports we write.
- 5.6 Building a network of academic institutions and research experts to share information about research developments relating to the promotion and protection of children's rights, and to encourage children's rights issues in both research disciplines, and the associated training and development of professionals who work with children.

## Budget and resources 2014–15

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s is funded by a grant-in-aid from the Department for Education. The budget for 2014–15 is yet to be confirmed. Therefore, this Business Plan is based on an assumption that OCC’s budget for 2014–15 will be £2.832 million. This figure has been derived from the sum of OCC and the Office of the Children’s Rights Director’s (OCRD) budget in 2013–14. The pie chart below summarises how we will use our expected budget to deliver our plan and statutory remit. The chart is followed by a brief explanation of what the main cost headings in the chart represent.

**Figure 1: How we will use our expected budget**



### Staff costs

While staff costs represent a high proportion of the organisation’s budget (68%), it is important to note that at least 67% of staff costs are dedicated to those delivering projects, programmes and working directly with children and young people. Adding this figure to the programme budget, OCC will spend at least two thirds of its budget on work that directly impacts children and young people.

### Programme delivery

Programme delivery concerns the cost of undertaking and delivering the majority of work outlined under the strategic priorities above. It includes the cost of undertaking or commissioning investigations, inquiries and research that will lead to OCC’s reports and policy recommendations. Providing advice, assistance and representation for children living

away from home or receiving social care is also included in this part of the budget, as is the cost of our participation work with children across England.

### **Fixed costs**

Fixed costs are non-staff items of expenditure that OCC is committed to meeting, even if we undertake no activity at all. This category is made up of the following items:

**Figure 2: Table of fixed costs**

Premises costs	179,028
Governance	45,088
Capital	18,616
<b>Total</b>	<b>433,866</b>

Governance costs for 2014-15 will include the cost of external audit, internal audit, the Audit and Risk Committee's travel expenses, production of the annual report and costs associated with setting-up and supporting the new Children's Commissioner's Advisory Board. Premises costs include rent, service charges and utilities, whereas capital expenditure relates to the costs and depreciation linked to fixtures and fittings, equipment and the new website developed for 2014-15 and the organisation's new role and remit.

### **Enhancing efficiency**

We will continue to seek efficiencies across all parts of the budget in 2014-15, building on those achieved in previous years. The efficiency savings made in 2013-14 will enable us to do more in the year ahead with a standstill budget for planned activity than would otherwise have been the case, given the climate of continued price inflation. The costs associated with the transition to our new remit will be met from our expected allocation, including resources transferring to OCC from Ofsted.

Our continued drive to keep fixed and back-office costs as low as possible will mean that OCC will be able to increase its front-line project budget from £277,000 to almost £512,000, an increase of 85% since 2013-14. We will also be able to address an expected rise in approaches for advice, assistance and representation.

## Our project goals and performance measurement

We will work in line with the Children’s Commissioner’s expected new remit and role set out in legislation and be consistent with the United Nation’s expectations for National Human Rights Institutions. The table below outlines the major projects that the Office of the Children’s Commissioner will deliver and/or commence during 2014–15. It is not appropriate or possible to list all the work the Office undertakes in this table (and which is outlined under our strategic priorities above). For example, the nature and extent of responsive work and submissions to consultation exercises cannot be predicted or planned in the same way as a research project whose outputs and outcomes can be planned for from the outset.

Therefore, the list below represents projects for which there will be identified managers, budgets and detailed plans approved by the Children’s Commissioner. The table provides a brief overview of work whose outcomes will be recorded in our annual report.

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
<p><b>Promoting and protecting the rights of children living away from home or receiving social care (including provision of advice, assistance and representation) (1.2, 1.4)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing advice, assistance, and representation in an appropriate way, consistent with the service and legacy provided by the Office of the Children’s Rights Director. Clear advice will be published as to whom we will provide this service, how the service will be delivered and feedback/ evaluation collected from those who receive the service</li> <li>• Publish and disseminate child friendly advice on rights and the law for children in care, care leavers, or children and young people in contact with a social worker</li> </ul>	<p>OCC’s new Care and Protection team, to be established in April 2014, will promote and protect the rights of children and young people living away from home or receiving social care through its direct work providing advice, assistance and representation, with clear evidence of the cases and issues dealt with through to resolution.</p> <p>Children and young people living away from home or receiving social care will have a greater awareness of their rights through the use of OCC website and published information (written and virtual)</p>	<p>Director of Policy</p>

<sup>1</sup> These are corporate level outputs and are only some of the deliverables noted in individual project plans.

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence and responses to key consultations and inquiries</li> <li>• Develop and embark on at least one extensive investigation into an issue impacting the outcomes of children in care informed by a programme of visits to residential care settings</li> <li>• Informing DfE, Ofsted and other relevant stakeholders of OCC's work in this area, reporting on key findings and emerging issues</li> </ul>	<p>Policy makers and OCC stakeholders will be more aware of these children and young people's rights through our engagement with them, and be better placed to promote and protect their rights through adopting and implementing recommendations made by OCC in reports, submissions and consultation responses</p> <p>The views, interests and experiences of children and young people living away from home or receiving social care are reflected across OCC's work</p>	
<p><b>Annual Children in Care Monitor (1.3)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish enhanced methodology, data requirements and plan for producing the Care Monitor 2014. This will be based on feedback from DfE, care providers and children and young people of how they wish to see the Monitor developed and used</li> <li>• Publish Care Monitor no later than 1 March 2015</li> </ul>	<p>For the local authorities and those providing services to children living away from home or receiving social care to be fully engaged and support the production of Care Monitor, ensuring high return rates for the call for evidence</p> <p>That the children's sector, government and relevant inspectorates actively use the Monitor to shape their work and refer to the evidence it presents</p>	<p>Director of Policy</p>
<p><b>Child poverty (2.1, 2.2)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to the Government's Child Poverty Strategy in April 2014</li> <li>• Evidence on the impact of policies and services that target early years poverty</li> <li>• Evidence of the impact on poverty of local provision for low income families</li> </ul>	<p>We will seek to inform and influence government policy and decisions, focusing especially on the Child Poverty Strategy and Child Poverty Commission's annual report</p> <p>The needs of children living in poverty are</p>	<p>Director of Policy</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	<p>with children under five</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings between young people living in poverty and relevant parts of government, including the Child Poverty Unit</li> </ul>	<p>better met through the implementation of recommendations in OCC reports on child poverty published in 2012 and 2013</p>	
<p><b>Impact of education policy (2.3)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of our consultation on ‘what the outcomes of the education system should be’</li> <li>• Publish an assessment as to how far reforms to the education system have achieved these outcomes, with a focus on the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Respond to key consultations and opportunities to inform the policy debate and practice through articles and conferences</li> </ul>	<p>Recommendations from OCC’s Inquiry into school exclusions adopted and implemented so that young people excluded from school are better able to realise improved educational outcomes (engagement and attainment)</p> <p>For education policy to be informed and influenced by children’s rights and results of OCC’s work on education outcomes and impact of policy on children’s rights</p>	<p>Children’s Commissioner</p>
<p><b>Complaints in the education system (2.4)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish evidence on how complaints systems operate for different types of complaint in different school settings</li> <li>• Publish a report on the accessibility of school complaints system for young people</li> <li>• Adapt OCC’s child friendly complaints system principles for schools – promote across the schools sector</li> <li>• Identifying gaps in the system of complaints and propose ways of addressing these</li> </ul>	<p>For children, young people and parents to have a better understanding of their rights and how the school complaints system</p> <p>Schools to be clear about what good practice with regard to a complaints system for and in schools looks like, and for government and schools to promote OCC’s principles</p>	<p>Children’s Commissioner</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
<p><b>Wellbeing in residential special schools (2.5)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on outcomes of visits to residential special schools and the steps being taken to safeguard pupils</li> <li>• Publish the views of children and young people in the residential special schools system</li> <li>• Report and recommendations on the steps that are needed in order to protect their rights and promote their wellbeing</li> </ul>	<p>To promote (and realise) the protection of, and safe environment for, children and young people in the residential special schools setting</p> <p>For government, inspectorates, and schools to adopt and implement OCC's recommendations</p>	<p>Deputy Children's Commissioner</p>
<p><b>Mental Health and wellbeing (2.7)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Amplify project on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services drawing on the views and experiences of children and young people</li> <li>• Research on the issues facing particular groups who are at greatest risk of experiencing emotional wellbeing and mental health problems</li> </ul>	<p>Amplify's work to improve access and quality of advice will be disseminated to and inform CAMHs providers and health commissioning bodies</p> <p>Children and young people will be better informed of their rights in relation to mental health services and the support available</p>	<p>Children's Commissioner</p>
<p><b>Child Sexual Exploitation in Groups and Gangs (3.1, 3.2)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission an evaluation of a small number of <i>See Me, Hear Me</i> pilot sites. The evaluation of the pilots will take a minimum of two years, with progress reports published at regular intervals</li> <li>• A review of progress on implementing the recommendations of the Inquiry</li> <li>• A series of sector specific briefing papers on the substantial body of evidence not yet published</li> </ul>	<p>For the CSEGG Inquiry findings and recommendations to be accepted and implemented so that the work and policies of government, national bodies and local service providers leads to the better protection of children and young people</p> <p>Number of references to the CSEGG Inquiry and report are contained in national strategy documents, guidance and consultation</p>	<p>Deputy Children's Commissioner</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
		documents, proving impact of our work on policy and practice	
<b>Child Sexual Abuse (3.3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the results of a rapid evidence assessment into the known evidence base on child sexual abuse that takes place in intrafamilial environments</li> <li>• Establish an expert advisory group to inform and advise the OCC's work on child sexual abuse</li> <li>• Commence a two year investigation examining prevalence, context for child sexual abuse, barriers to recognition and treatment amongst other aspects</li> </ul>	<p>Raise awareness amongst child protection agencies of the scale of intrafamilial child sexual abuse and its short and long term impact on victims. Improve the national knowledge base so that effective prevention is effected, victims are identified quickly, made safe and support and remedial work provided</p> <p>Identify prevalence, high risk groups and indicators</p>	Deputy Children's Commissioner
<b>Refugee and asylum seeking children and young people (3.4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute children and young people's perspectives to guidance being written by the age-assessment working group of the Association of Directors of Children's Services Asylum Task Force (ADCS-ATF)</li> <li>• Building on research conducted in 2013, work with partner organisations to develop appropriate policy responses to the situation of former unaccompanied children who become appeal rights exhausted Where appropriate, provide advice, assistance and representations on behalf of children and young people,</li> </ul>	<p>Promote and protect the rights and welfare of refugee and asylum seeking children especially; unaccompanied and separated children; those who may have been trafficked and; children in families subject to immigration control, through reporting on our work with these groups of children and young people and having our recommendations for improving their situations accepted and implemented.</p> <p>Ensure national strategy documents and guidance are inclusive of the needs and rights of all children subject to</p>	Children's Commissioner

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	and, where OCC's criteria are met, make interventions in strategic legal cases to promote children's rights	immigration control as a result of influencing and providing evidence.	
<b>Children and young people detained or deprived of their liberty (3.5, 3.6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake regular visits to the children's secure estate in fulfilment of our NPM responsibilities including in the youth justice secure estate, mental health and immigration facilities</li> <li>• Continue to chair the children and young people's sub-group of the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) and contribute to its annual report</li> <li>• Publish a national picture of the practice being implemented across the secure estate (specific focus on Young Offenders Institutes, Secure Training Centres and Secure Children's Homes) based on evidence collected through OCC's powers of data collection and entry</li> <li>• Publish a report on the views and experiences of children and young people in custody of segregation and single separation</li> </ul>	<p>Improve the welfare and well-being of children in places where they are deprived of their liberty by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing institutions we visit with feedback and recommendations, and informing the YJB or other responsible agencies of recurring or significant issues</li> <li>• share learning and good practice across the sector through our role as chair of the NPM sub-group</li> <li>• highlighting particular vulnerabilities associated with detention through the analysis of data and evidence collected by OCC</li> </ul> <p>Children and young people's rights are better realised through an increased awareness of children's rights standards amongst the young people and professionals working in these settings</p>	Deputy Children's Commissioner
<b>Takeover Day (4.1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver Takeover Day 2014 with more children and young people participating in organisational decision-making</li> <li>• Review and refresh guidance and assistance available for organisations and individuals to take part</li> </ul>	<p>For Article 12 rights to be realised through greater numbers taking part in Takeover Day</p> <p>Greater public awareness of children's rights – especially Article 12 – through national and local media coverage of Takeover Day</p>	Director of Communications and Participation

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for children and young people to further participate in OCC's decision-making and 'take over' roles within the organisation</li> <li>• Further develop, promote, and evaluate the impact of Takeover Day to ensure it is embedded in children, young people, and public understanding and consciousness as an annual event embedded in strong participation in schools, services, businesses and localities</li> </ul>	<p>Increased participation of children and young people who have less means and access to the types of opportunity provided by Takeover Day (especially children in care)</p>	
<p><b>Amplify and Young Amplify (4.2, 4.3)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplify to have at least two residential meetings and at least one face-to-face meeting of each subject area/project sub-group during 2014–15</li> <li>• Report the voices and concerns of children and young people, through Amplify and the other advisory groups</li> <li>• Work directly with children under the age of 11 (creating a young Amplify group) and ensure that their views and experiences are part of the business planning process for 2015–16</li> </ul>	<p>Ensuring the views and experiences of children and young people inform and influence all of OCC's work including business development, advising projects, recruitment and procurement processes</p> <p>For children under the age of 10 to contribute to and influence OCC's work and the work of the Government and external organisations</p>	<p>Director of Communications and Participation</p>
<p><b>Children and young people's participation (4.3, 4.4, 4.5)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise and publish OCC's participation strategy</li> <li>• Develop and implement children's and young people's communications strategy</li> </ul>	<p>The positive impact that involving children and young people can have in influencing and improving strategic, organisational and individual levels of performance and service delivery will be highlighted in order to</p>	<p>Director of Communications and Participation</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop our work with children living away from home or receiving social care, including a programme of visits to different groups of children in care and care leavers across England</li> <li>Facilitate meetings between children living away from home or receiving social care to meet with the Minister for Children, other politicians and senior officials</li> <li>Establish participation networks across at least three of OCC's policy areas</li> </ul>	<p>promote similar best practice in other organisations</p> <p>For children living away from home or receiving social care, to be aware of the OCC's work and have opportunities to participate in our work</p> <p>For the views and experiences of these children and young people to influence government policy, with their views reflected in government statements, advice, guidance and policy</p>	
<b>Child Rights Impact Assessments (4.6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish two Child Rights Impact Assessments during 2014.</li> <li>Commission two new Child Rights Impact Assessments</li> </ul>	<p>Heighten awareness of children's rights and impact Government legislation and proposals through our CRIAs, leading to greater consideration of children's rights in the areas examined by OCC</p>	Director of Policy
<b>Impact of gender on young people's rights (4.7)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 16 month project that includes establishing an advisory group of leading experts</li> <li>Publish a Rapid Evidence Assessment/literature review mapping existing research and what is known. This will also highlight gaps in the research and potential questions for the project to focus on.</li> <li>Recruit young people's advisory group, and recruit and train young researchers to facilitate a participation-led methodology</li> </ul>	<p>An evidence base that impacts OCC's work and understanding of how to promote and protect young people's right to protection from violence and sexual abuse and exploitation as well as other rights including those relating to equal treatment and equality, health, education and protection</p> <p>That our evidence base would lead to the full realisation of articles 1, 2, 3, 12 as well as those noted above through government policy and local services accepting and</p>	Director of Policy

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
		<p>implementing the recommendations we make</p> <p>Reduce discrimination arising from gender stereotyping and inequalities and increase access to opportunity by raising awareness of and addressing these issues</p>	
<p><b>Promoting Children's Rights (4.8, 4.9, 4.10)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all OCC reports, responses and submissions contain information on children's rights and references to appropriate sections of the UNCRC</li> <li>• Publish briefings on key rights based issues</li> <li>• Based on OCC fulfilling its statutory remit to promote and protect the rights of children in England we will submit a shadow report to Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) before the UK's examination later in 2014</li> <li>• To provide clear criteria for when and why OCC will intervene in a legal case involving children, and to make an intervention in a limited number of strategic and precedent setting cases (likely to be no more than three)</li> </ul>	<p>Heighten awareness of children's rights amongst policy makers and our stakeholders through clearly linking children and young people's outcomes to the realisation of their rights</p> <p>For International Treaty Bodies other than the UNCRC to acknowledge children's rights and the distinct issues that may face children and young people in England. In 2014 we would want to see the CRPD reflect OCC's submission to the Committee in its examination and concluding observations to the UK</p> <p>For legal judgments to reflect and support the realisation of children's rights</p>	<p>Director of Policy</p>
<p><b>Communications (5.4)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, launch and support new OCC website</li> <li>• Develop and publish new guidance on communicating with children and young people</li> </ul>	<p>Improved awareness of the Children's Commissioner among children and young people through website, social media and better guidance on communicating with children and young people</p>	<p>Director of Communications and Participation</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish and disseminate four editions of OCC's newsletter</li> <li>• Undertake a review of OCC's social media presence and extending our use of social media as part of our communications and engagement activity</li> <li>• Publish children and young people's versions of key OCC reports</li> </ul>	<p>Greater awareness of OCC's work and key government developments amongst children and young people through awareness and use of children and young people's versions of key documents.</p> <p>Higher stakeholder and public awareness and engagement with the work of the OCC through our newsletter, reports and website</p>	
<p><b>Influencing national and international debates through membership of relevant bodies (2.6, 4.8)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively support and sustain the work of the European Network of Ombudsmen for Children (ENOC) and British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children's Commissioners (BINOCC) through our membership and participation in regular meetings, joint projects, communications and reports</li> <li>• Provide leadership to national bodies and membership organisations including the Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA) and National Participation Forum (NPF)</li> <li>• Provide support, through our membership/associate membership, to alliances and representative groups that support the promotion and protection of children's rights. These bodies include (but are not limited to) the Department of Health Children and</li> </ul>	<p>Raise profile and realise action on cross-border issues highlighted and addressed by all the UK Children's Commissioners through the joint work undertaken by them</p> <p>Realise improved support for children being bullied by supporting the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance</p> <p>Achieve a national voice for organisation's committed to supporting children and young people's participation through OCC's chairing of the NPF</p> <p>Impact the debate and output of organisations we that we are members of or contribute to</p>	<p>Children's Commissioner</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	<p>Young People’s Health Outcomes Forum, Family Justice Council (FJC), Regulators, Inspectors and Ombudsmen (RIO) Forum, the Alliance of Children in Care and Care Leavers (Note these are not exhaustive but are illustrative).</p>		
<p><b>Research network (5.6)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A network of research experts to share information about research developments relating to the promotion and protection of children’s rights.</li> </ul>	<p>Keep up to date with research</p> <p>A research and evidence base on key issues</p> <p>Consult key experts on key issues and develop research advisory groups</p> <p>Disseminate information, research and tenders for research</p> <p>Encourage academic institutions whose work includes training professionals to work with children to include modules of study on the rights of the child in such training and development</p>	
<p><b>Financial, Audit and Risk Management (5.3)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly returns to Department for Education, Cabinet Office</li> <li>• Production and review of monthly audit files, updated risk register and project management meetings</li> <li>• Annual reviews of Financial procedures, HR Staff Handbook, Procurement Manual and policies</li> <li>• Production of annual accounts and</li> </ul>	<p>Returns which comply with Cabinet Office and DfE requirements will be completed accurately and on time</p> <p>Assurance to the accounting officer by the Audit and Risk Committee of strong and robust financial and budgetary control, risk management, and information assurance.</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p>

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	audit file for NAO, with month nine draft financial statements for NAO and DfE.		
<b>Procurement, HR and Performance (5.3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly procurement reports submitted to Leadership team</li> <li>• Quarterly Performance Reports submitted to Leadership Team</li> <li>• HR quarterly updates</li> </ul>	<p>Procurement compliant with Cabinet Office and DfE requirements</p> <p>Performance monitoring and review enabling OCC meet objectives of the Business Plan</p> <p>Effective management of the HR function enabling the OCC to fulfil its remit and comply with relevant legislation</p>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>Public Sector Equality Duty (5.3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish objectives showing due regard to eliminate discrimination and harassment, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations</li> </ul>	<p>OCC is compliant with the legislation, guidance and good practice in terms of equality policy and practice</p> <p>OCC's Business Plan and work reflects the outcome of its regular equality audit of its work programme and projects.</p>	Director of Corporate Services
<b>Governance and Administration (5.3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New correspondence system to deal with all correspondence and enquiries efficiently, sensitively and on a timely basis</li> <li>• Respond in a timely and appropriate manner to Freedom of Information requests</li> <li>• Meetings, venue and travel booked on time to ensure compliance with</li> </ul>	<p>Governance meetings undertaken showing strong challenge and support to the business of the OCC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Board</li> <li>• Audit and Risk</li> <li>• Commissioner Board</li> <li>• DfE Sponsor Team</li> </ul>	Director of Corporate Services

Project	What are we going to deliver? <sup>1</sup> (Outputs)	What do we want to achieve? (Outcomes)	Project sponsor
	efficiency controls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management kept up to date and managed effectively</li> <li>• Management of the Children's Commissioner information request box</li> <li>• Signposting referral of callers to appropriate organisations for advice and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QMG</li> </ul> Freedom of Information report produced every six months and published on the new website	
<b>Post-transition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of a new OCCE Business Plan no later than 1 April 2015</li> <li>• smooth transition to new office premises</li> </ul>	Deliver full 2014–15 Business Plan by April 2015 OCC relocated without disruption to our work and service provision	Director of Corporate Services

## How we will manage our risks

The OCC will continue to operate its risk management strategy, identifying strategic and programme risks at senior level, as well as using programme and project management to manage risks to business delivery. The strategic risk register is reviewed monthly at the Quality Management Group and is regularly reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee.

## How we will respond to change

We know from experience that new challenges and interferences with children's rights can arise or be uncovered at any point. In addition, there are new opportunities to promote children's rights and improve their outcomes. Therefore, to enable us to respond at pace we will review this Business Plan on a regular basis at the Children's Commissioner's Board to discuss resource allocation.

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