

CLOSING WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF CORAM

Introduction and overview

1. Coram continues to consider that, because of its constituent parts and underpinning ethos, it occupies a unique role amongst the Core Participants in being able to provide a particularly broad perspective on the impact that the pandemic had on children and young people. This is due to the breadth and diversity of the work that it conducts across different sectors. Coram sees Module 8 of the Inquiry as an opportunity to build on some of the legacy of the pandemic and address some of the shortcomings highlighted by the governmental response.
2. Coram considers that engagement by government with key third-sector organisations is critical. The various organisations which make up the Coram Group are ready to play an active and ongoing role in future pandemic and emergency planning. Coram is uniquely well placed to assist in providing support and identifying strategy both in preparation for the next pandemic and when the need actually arises. Coram considers itself able to bridge the wide chasm between statutory and charitable organisations. It hopes that the government will build on the foundations already laid and ensure that in the future contingency planning involves members of the Coram Group.
3. Coram has a deep understanding of the complexities and difficulties that the government faced during the pandemic. It has, in conjunction with others during the Inquiry, sought to ensure that children's voices and perspectives are heard both now in reflecting upon the response to the pandemic and in the future in pandemic planning. It would be an opportunity missed if in curating a response to another, future pandemic, the interests of children were consigned to the margins or left as an afterthought, as so often seemed to be the case in respect of Covid 19. The evidence of Professor Simon Turner, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), supported the view that there was a lack of attention to the impact on children and that the government's response deprioritised the interests of children. Coram respectfully agrees with Professor Turner's analysis.

4. In considering the oral evidence and statements filed by other witnesses, it is clear that a number of the issues and concerns that have been identified by Coram are recognised by others. The need for better consultation between the government and third-sector organisations is a common thread amongst relevant Core Participants. The President of the RCPCH notes in his statement that his organisation called for the Prime Minister to hold a child and young people briefing, but that this opportunity was not taken up. The offer was also extended to the Secretary of State for Health, who also declined a meeting with the RCPCH. This chimes with Coram's experiences. It appeared during the hearings that, upon reflection, members of government regretted this oversight and saw that holding briefings for children and young people was a missed opportunity.
5. These submissions are to be read together with the submissions made on behalf of the Coram Group, written and oral, which were themselves informed by the statement filed by the group's CEO, Dr Homden CBE.
6. In her evidence, Dr Homden CBE stated that, pandemic or not, it:

is a key moral duty of society to prepare for the next generation of citizens. And of course, unless we do so, we will reap the consequences.

7. There can be no doubt that Covid 19 posed a major challenge to our whole community. Many key and essential workers and a number of those in government rose to that challenge, as did many civil servants and members of parliament. The Coram Group pays tribute to them.
8. However, it is also unquestionable that there were real harms which were engendered by the inadequacies of the governmental response to the pandemic. Alongside the findings in respect of Module Two, which the Coram Group has read with interest, there have been a number of threads running through the evidence in this module from different witnesses that confirms this. Coram is confident that this Inquiry will not shy away from identifying them so that they may be mitigated or avoided in the future.
9. These closing submissions on behalf of Coram will focus upon what it considers to be some of the key areas that have been traversed and highlighted during the course of

Module 8, setting out both Coram's concluding views and what it invites the Chair specifically to consider in relation to the evidence that has been heard in each of the key areas.

Existing inequality

10. The Inquiry knows that Coram considers that the pandemic compounded existing inequalities for children in our society. The evidence from a number of Core Participants supports the contention that, while some perceptible progress was gradually being made to the educational attainment gap, there was, following the era of austerity, rising child poverty with resulting negative consequences when Covid 19 struck.
11. In consequence, there was a high incidence of children and young people who were disabled, living with mental health conditions, experiencing economic and housing insecurity or living in households where domestic and other forms of abuse were prevalent. That was the low baseline from which too many children started when the pandemic took hold. In a number of ways about which the Inquiry has heard, the pandemic served to amplify the disenfranchisement and privations suffered by many children.
12. Much of the evidence which the Inquiry has heard supports Coram's contention that for children, including, in particular, those who were less advantaged and vulnerable, the recovery has been much too slow, and the resources applied to mitigate the harm caused, inadequate. This includes the fact that the advice the government itself sought from Sir Kevin Collins was largely ignored, with the decision that only a fraction of the sum he considered necessary was to be directed towards recovery within the education system.

Lack of preparedness at the start and at key stages of the pandemic

13. The evidence – both written and oral - supports the position that there was a lack of preparation for the pandemic and its likely impact on children and young people. Some of that deficiency resulted from the government and its advisers predicating their response upon models which were, in the final analysis, unhelpful: it appears that such planning as there was, was one dimensional, failing to consider and engage with

alternative, but realistic scenarios. There was also clearly a lack of foresight at the very start of the Covid 19 pandemic as to the direction of travel and the contingency planning that was necessary. This was driven by so-called “optimism bias” in the face of stark scientific data being fed to the key government departments, including the Department for Education (DfE), from SAGE as confirmed by Professor Sir Chris Whitty in his evidence.

14. Some of the shortcomings arose out of a failure to anticipate what was inevitable. This was exacerbated by an absence of consultation with (as opposed to a tendency to inform, often at the last minute) key individuals and organisations whose focus was on children and young people as the pandemic came into sight and developed. It included a failure to engage with expert organisations, such as the Coram Group, as data became available and the experiences of children and young people started to be understood. Dr Carol Homden CBE gave cogent evidence about the willingness of Coram to play its part in the response to the Covid 19 emergency as well as the fact that there was an absence of consultation not only with Coram, but with other important organisations in the third sector and beyond. This includes with key stakeholders such as the Children’s Commissioner, over issues which would fundamentally impact children’s lives. Coram considers that the complaint that decision making became increasingly centralised is a fair one and that the interests of children were lost without anyone advocating for them within the inner circles of government.
15. This seems to be both a reflection of and reason for the failure to give any or any sufficient priority to children’s needs during the pandemic. It was as if children’s well-being was relegated to below that of adults, or that they were being treated as an afterthought when policy was considered and legislation enacted in response to the growing crisis. The clear sense which emerges is that while it was recognised that children and young people would be more vulnerable to risk within their families as a result of the way in which society organised itself during the pandemic, the decision was nevertheless taken to reduce safeguards. This suggests a decision was made at some point that children were acceptable collateral damage. This was coupled with the fact that, as stated, there was increasingly centralised decision making without centralised data to inform it, leading to the wrong conclusions being reached and issues which were particularly relevant to children being overlooked.
16. This failure to anticipate was coupled with a lack of attention as to how children might be treated differently from adults and could be made subject to different rules. There

may have been an understandable caution in the initial stages of the pandemic when the lethality of the pandemic for children was unclear. However, as time progressed and as there was a greater appreciation of the fact that children were less likely to die or suffer serious illness from Covid 19, there seems to have been a lack of agility in the governmental response when it came to the consideration of children.

17. By way of example, the Inquiry has heard evidence about the way in which the definition of exercise was focused on adult activities and that, though the risks were different for the vast majority of children, it took too long for the social distancing rules to be modified for children. This adult-focused approach had a deleterious impact on children's ability to learn and engage through peer-to-peer play with socialisation being entirely unacknowledged by central government as a key factor in children's development.

School closures

18. Coram acknowledges and is grateful for the efforts which many schoolteachers and education professionals made to educate, support and monitor children and young people during the pandemic.
19. There can be no doubt that the pandemic required an urgent response to an unprecedented set of circumstances. Consideration of how to achieve the delivery of education should have been a priority for government. The absence of planning for country-wide school closures and the abrupt change of plan by the government in mid-March 2020, has been interrogated at length by the Inquiry, in particular in the evidence of former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and former Education Secretary Sir Gavin Williamson.
20. It is very clear that school closures were not only foreseeable but likely well before March 2020. SAGE evidence confirms that the advice from as early as 4 February 2020 was that school closures were a realistic and distinct possibility. Yet, as Susan Acland-Hood, the Permanent Secretary at DfE, acknowledged in her evidence, that did not lead to any operational planning for school closures. It appears that all of the focus within the DfE was on keeping schools open, and that this was informed by a "steer" from central government. Even after having heard the evidence from Sir Gavin and Mr Johnson it is difficult to understand why so little thought was being given and planning undertaken as the prospect of shutting schools for most children loomed

increasingly large. Neither witness provided adequate explanation as to the reasons for the lack of planning and lack of guidance in place when schools all but shut down in March 2020. Here, as with many other areas, vital time was lost in the lead up to the lock down announced in March 2020. There also appeared to be an ongoing issue of a lack of reflection of what should have been done differently with the benefit of hindsight.

21. As to the decision to close schools for the majority of students, the evidence having now been completed, it remains difficult to understand why when significant decisions such as this, which had a direct impact on children and which related to school closures, were taken there was no representative from the DfE in the room. The consequence was that the governmental department charged with delivering education could not contribute to the decision making or advocate for children. This compounded the failure to consult with the Office of the Children's Commissioner. It also meant that the fact that Sir Gavin Williamson was the "Minister for Children" under the umbrella of the DfE was a hollow response to the question of whether such a position should now be created.
22. Equally, there was a lack of ownership as to whose responsibility it was to plan. Mr Johnson said he thought the DfE was engaged in that work. Yet the DfE was "discombobulated" by the closures in March 2020 and apparently blindsided by school closures in January 2021. The Inquiry is left with the question as to who exactly was ultimately responsible for planning for children and the education system.
23. What was clear from the evidence of Ms Acland-Hood was that when the decision to close schools was made, it was made without consultation or advanced notice to schools or multi-academy trusts informing them that they needed to plan for educating the vast majority of children at home.
24. It was also clear from the evidence of Indra Morris (former Director General of DfE) and Ms Acland-Hood that planning for delineating which vulnerable children should be able to continue to attend schools started in mid-March 2020, on the eve of school closures. This was far too late in the day. It was also not informed by evidence available from the Office of the Children's Commissioner or statutory authorities on the issue of vulnerability.

25. In respect of decision making, Ms Acland-Hood reported that a draft equality impact assessment had been prepared *after* the decision to close schools was taken. The absence of an impact assessment *prior* to school closures is telling. As the Inquiry heard, the Public Sector Equality Duty applies to all functions of public authorities, not just decision moments and the fact that an assessment is drafted does not fulfil the duty—the duty is fulfilled by giving due consideration at the moment of the decision.
26. It is also important to consider the evidence of Ms Acland Hood, who acknowledged the two inherent limitations of equality impact assessments for children: first, socioeconomic disadvantage is not a protected characteristic despite being a crucial factor for children's development and education; and, secondly, age is not a protected characteristic for provision of services.
27. The importance of proper evaluation of the impact of closing schools follows from the fact that the Inquiry has received evidence from many confirming the myriad ways in which schools are important to the wellbeing of children. Attending school is about more than learning. It offers children the opportunity to socialise, play and feel part of a community. Children are fed at school. Some receive various forms of therapy at school. The vital services provided simply cannot be reduced to education alone.
28. Teachers and pastoral staff are also often on the front line of safeguarding and identifying behavioural problems and additional needs in children. The pandemic prevented the sort of “eyes on” approach that might enable a teacher to pick up on emerging difficulties and safeguarding concerns. When looked at in conjunction with the relaxation of the regulations governing the delivery of social work, non-attendance at school heightened the risks of a child suffering harm or being unrecognised and/or becoming invisible to society.
29. As to the delivery of education during the pandemic, the Inquiry has heard evidence from those responsible for decision-making in respect of schools and from the professionals required to deal directly with the impact of school closures for students, save for those deemed vulnerable or the children of key workers. The Inquiry has seen the disappointing figures for school attendance, even for students who were still entitled to go to school. Professor Gillean McCluskey gave cogent evidence about this issue. The Coram Group notes the views expressed by her and others more closely involved in the provision of education and has considered the research as to the difficulties with categorisation of what constituted a vulnerable student, together with

the deficiencies in respect of public messaging and guidance about the exercise of teachers' discretion, which meant that those who needed to be in school so often were not.

30. It is noted that some local authorities like Kent County Council extended central government's definition of vulnerable children eligible for school attendance to encompass a greater cohort. This was in recognition of the need to provide the protections which school offered to a wider pool of children. Sarah Hammond (Director of Children's Services at Kent County Council) gave helpful evidence about parental resistance to vulnerable children attending school, with families too often viewing it as stigmatising and dangerous for their children to keep going to school, rather than as a means of support. Ms Hammond suggested better consultation with local authorities could have improved messaging. This also reinforces the point that school is instrumental in efforts to achieve social equality.
31. The Inquiry will also have to engage with the issue of what has been termed the digital divide. Access to the internet and to devices to access education during the pandemic compounded inequalities. It is notable that, having identified the need for the provision of laptops etc. for children, the sourcing of the devices all too often took months to organise. Sir Hamid Patel (CEO of the Star Academies multi-academy trust) gave important evidence about the late arrival of DfE laptops and the fact that once they arrived, they were largely unusable. The need for devices was foreseeable, as was the fact that during a global pandemic the channels of distribution would be affected. That is why preparation was so important and the lack of it so impactful.
32. Coram recognises and highlights the evidence from the Sutton Trust that the attainment gap between children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and their peers widened considerably during the pandemic, wiping out ten years of slow progress in closing this gap. The gap has not yet shown any significant signs of closing or reducing post-pandemic.
33. There have been lasting impacts in respect of school attendance following the pandemic, as Professor Gilleen McClusky confirmed. There is an increase in persistent and severe absence as confirmed by Baroness Anne Longfield, former Children's Commissioner for England. Children have a right to an education and, therefore, it is also important to record that as a result of the pandemic, the contract between parents

and schools appears to have been broken as the expectation that children will attend school has been eroded.

34. By moving learning online, government in effect sought to apply the novel practices of “working from home” to children, irrespective of the consequences of the lack of equal access to devices to make this function, or the age and stage of development of children: for younger children, attendance at school is in part about learning how to learn.
35. The onus is on society (and in particular adults) to recognise that the legacy of the pandemic and of a “digital first” era is that the purpose of school has shifted. Social and emotional development, critical thinking and cultural experience are more important than ever before (as recognised in the government’s recent Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report, which was published on 5 November 2025 shortly after completion of Module 8’s public hearings).

Children’s lives generally in the pandemic

36. In normal times and without school closures, children only spend one quarter of their time in school. Much of life happens outside the school gates. Though the Inquiry, for understandable reasons, focused a great deal of attention on the closure of schools, there must be equal attention to the experience of children at home and in community when not in education. The Inquiry knows that the experience of children when Covid 19 was rife was significantly constrained. The impacts on children’s mental and physical health was evident in the aftermath of the pandemic and are still being felt today, with an explosion of referrals in respect of mental health issues, including eating disorders, as confirmed by witnesses such as Professor Tamsin Newlove-Delgado.
37. Coram acknowledges the need for the government to act with urgency and to weigh in the balance competing interests of different groups and cohorts in society. However, Coram aligns with others in considering that, when evaluating how to respond to the pandemic and which policies to put in place in respect of broader social structures, family life, facilities at home, access to play facilities and support for those children who were not with their families, the government all too often struck the wrong balance. It seems that that was at least in part because of a lack of attention to children’s needs and a failure to consult with those who had those needs at the centre of their thinking.

Social work during the pandemic

38. Children whose family circumstances were difficult as a result of abuse or the risks of abuse, or who were being harmed or at risk of harm for other social and environmental reasons, were often exposed to greater peril during full or partial lockdowns. The need did not change, but access to monitoring, support and services did.
39. Much of the early response to the pandemic appears, as a result of modelling, to have been predicated on the fear that there would be rates of absence in the workforce in far higher numbers than in fact occurred. However, the changes (or easements) made by the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which were erroneously described to Baroness Longfield as minor, were fundamental. They paved the way for substantial reductions in standards of care as well as support for vulnerable children when they needed it most.
40. As a result of the regulatory changes, the duties of social workers were now framed in such a way as to put the emphasis on social workers not conducting visits to vulnerable children at home, rather than on continuing to visit them unless it was unsafe to do so. This was at best a misstep and meant that where children were at risk of harm or known to be experiencing harm, the sort of 360-degree assessment which a home visit might allow did not happen. Further, the change to remote assessment generally reduced the efficacy of the evaluations made.
41. Vicky Ford (former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the DfE) accepted that the guidance for local authorities in respect of these changes in the regulations was produced in a rush. She acknowledged that social workers may have needed to do 'at home' visits more but indicated that there was a constant push and pull with the messaging from DfE to stay at home and isolate. She accepted that the flexibility in the guidance was not clear enough. It seems clear that greater emphasis should be placed on meeting the needs of, and duties to, children, rather than affording flexibility or reducing the risks and anxieties of adults. We will never know the full extent of the impact that this had on our most vulnerable members of society. Coram registers its concern that the changes led to fewer home visits for children who were exposed to risk at home.
42. On an entirely practical level, social workers were inhibited from performing their role by a lack of PPE and the absence of specific guidance for moving between homes.

43. The impact of the regulatory amendments on visiting children at home was only one aspect of the changes to social work delivery, as Professor Samantha Baron of the British Association of Social Workers identified. Children in institutional care were also less likely to receive face-to-face visits. That meant that assessments of those children in secure or residential accommodation did not happen in a timely way.
44. The alterations in the regulatory framework for social workers came at the same time as redeployment of health visitors and similar changes to practice on their part. This left greater vulnerabilities in the safeguarding system.
45. There was also a lack of guidance from government about how to progress adoptive placements, and therefore Coram produced its own guidance in an attempt to mitigate delays for children for whom making progress was time critical. This is an indication of where Coram (and other infrastructure or system leaders) could assist in any future emergency.

Children in care

46. Coram has extensive experience, and has conducted a significant amount of research in relation to the situation of children in care and care leavers generally, including during and after the pandemic. It held a huge library of information which would have assisted the government in its preparation and response to the Covid-19 emergency. It remains a concern and a disappointment that it was not called upon to assist the government when the pandemic took hold. Coram is keen to assist in any preparations for the next health emergency.
47. Coram's evidence touched upon the issue of children in care and care leaver's experiences during the pandemic. It draws upon a wealth of material to inform its written and oral evidence to the Inquiry. This includes Coram Voice's "Bright Spots Programme", which collected the views of children in care on their subjective wellbeing. Its findings were recorded in the publication "10,000 voices: the views of children in care on their wellbeing".
48. Coram commends those who provided foster care for children during the pandemic. While the care system has been under strain for a long time, those children who Coram surveyed and who were in care were generally positive about their

experiences. Furthermore, the 10,000 voices report suggested that, while children in care faced difficulties that should not be understated, a properly run care system had the potential to transform vulnerable children's lives for the better.

49. During the pandemic foster care could offer the stability that many children needed and served to insulate them from some of the negative societal impacts of the crisis. However, there remained ways in which children in care and care leavers were adversely affected or further disadvantaged by the pandemic. Dr Homden gave evidence, supported by others, about the detrimental effect that restrictions on face-to-face contact between children and their families had on children in care. She also highlighted the adverse experiences of care leavers in "cliff edge" situations.
50. The research suggests that children in precarious living situations, such as those who were homeless or in custody, felt a greater impact than others. For example, such children found it more difficult to get in touch with their leaving care worker compared to before the pandemic.
51. Coram also highlighted that while some children in care found the practice of online engagement with professionals from social care beneficial, others were more comfortable with remote interactions and it better suited their circumstances.

Asylum-seeking children

52. Coram was grateful to the Inquiry for indicating that it would allow, as part of its broader consideration of the impact of the pandemic on children, a spotlight to be shone on the how asylum-seeking children fared in the pandemic. It is regrettable that, ultimately, Sir Matthew Rycroft was not asked during the hearing about this issue. The inquiry is asked to review the written evidence in respect of the treatment of asylum-seeking children in the pandemic. As Coram has indicated, the impact on such children was different and distinct from their peers.
53. These children are vulnerable and were made all the more so during the pandemic. They were placed in unregulated placements by the Home Office and often unable to access any support or services. This left many facing the challenges of navigating the asylum application process with limited or no support.

54. Asylum-seeking children and young people found themselves in circumstances and were housed in unregulated placements which left them at risk of exploitation and criminality. Children being accommodated in hotels and in circumstances where they received no social work support and services amounts to a total failure in respect of safeguarding.

55. As Dr Homden's evidence for Coram emphasised, it is very troubling that a significant number of these children went missing during the pandemic and their whereabouts remain unknown to this day. Without specific focus and clearer accountability, this tragedy risks being set to reoccur. Lessons have not been learned; as a report just published by two respected organisations in the anti-trafficking sector shows, unaccompanied children, many of them trafficked, continue to go missing from care at an unacceptable rate.¹ Without significant planning and improvement in this area, these children will continue to be some of the most at risk of serious harm in the next crisis.

Data sharing and consultation

56. In England there was a marked lack of consultation with agencies outside of government and, it seems, at times within government itself. Sir Jon Coles (Chief Executive of United Learning Academies) emphasised what he thought was an inexplicable reluctance to share data while assisting the government. There have been numerous references to increasing degrees of centralisation of decision-making throughout this Module. There have been consistent themes about the lack of centralised government data collection to inform decision making, and the lack of provision of data to enable stakeholders to make informed decisions themselves, offer cogent advice and even simply to understand the imperatives driving policy and guidance. This haphazard approach to data collection and sharing is not acceptable for 21st-century government and is surely a gap that must be filled by a national protocol for emergencies.

Conclusion: looking forward

¹ "Until Harm Ends: An update report on trafficked and unaccompanied children going missing from care in the UK", ECPAT UK and Missing People (November 2025).

57. Impact assessments do not *require* there to be a Cabinet Minister for children. The upholding of children's rights and a focus on their needs does not *require* the recognition of the UNCRC. However, the fact that England has neither, meant that there was no one in cabinet with the specific role of ensuring that children's interests were given any or any sufficient priority. Had there been, the lack of preparedness over schools closing might have been avoided. The tension between the Prime Minister and the Department for Education over that issue brings into sharp relief the importance of having a minister with a portfolio (as opposed to children falling under the purview of the DfE) overseeing all aspects of policy which touches on children and young people to avoid siloed thinking and ensure children and young people are at the centre of planning and decision making.
58. Equally without children's rights formally being recognised, it was easier to dispense with or forget about consulting with those who have children's rights and interests at the top of their priority list. This led to children as a sub-group of society being ignored, forgotten or disregarded.
59. As part of a new approach to ensuring that the rights of children are respected and the interests of children occupy their rightful place in the hierarchy of considerations, Coram endorses the Children's Commissioners' call for meaningful statutory consultation with them as part of emergency planning, and during times of national emergency.
60. However, as indicated in Coram's opening submissions, while Coram supports its colleagues in the CRO group's call for incorporation of the UNCRC across the UK, incorporation without good implementation is hollow, and the evidence before the Inquiry shows the importance of putting in place good practice and risk planning now, so that children's needs will be considered and protected in future crises.
61. There needs to be a comprehensive set of plans in anticipation of the next pandemic. Within advanced emergency planning it is essential that the voices of children are heard and continue to be heard during times of emergency through organised consultation with bodies that have a significant representational role and have significant data and relevant expertise. For otherwise, while direct consultation with children is valuable, there is a risk that the needs of younger children and infants who cannot easily advocate for themselves will be overlooked.

62. Those undertaking emergency planning must not fall back into the trap of expecting the same epidemiological patterns as arose in respect of Covid 19. Different emergency plans must be considered in respect of a number of different scenarios. The plans will need to be robust but flexible. Coram stands ready to assist.
63. Equally, in preparation for the next pandemic, as the Children's Commissioner for Scotland proposed, there needs to be continued strategic and coordinated investment and expansion of good practices that developed during the pandemic. The ground already laid cannot be lost and needs to be built upon. Coram would suggest that that includes looking at funding for services that provide professional support to local authorities and those that provide front-line public advice services.
64. Coram has made clear in its evidence that children in care and those known to children's services should be treated as a distinct population in future emergencies. Their situations are profoundly different from those of nuclear families or adults. Failures in taking account of this meant that children quite tragically missed out on contact with family, rehabilitation, and adoption introductions.
65. The lack of communication with third-sector partners cannot happen again. The government has a phalanx of potential interlocutors upon whom to call and who can assist at this stage, as future planning is considered and when the next pandemic strikes, of whom the Coram Group is one. However, offering advice without knowledge is often unhelpful and generally unwise. Information sharing is vital to the smooth running of any response to the pandemic. Provision of information to interested parties is a necessity. Coram hopes it will be part of the planning process and will be able to contribute to the provision of data and be prioritised to receive it both in planning for and in the event of a future public health emergency.
66. Finally, in respect of the recovery. It was rightly recognised by government that significant investment would be needed not only to improve children's lives but to the restore them to where they were prior to the pandemic. The requisite resources have, as yet, simply not been forthcoming.
67. This is why Coram's Children's Charter published in December 2023 set the challenge calling for *"a sustained commitment over time to ensure that we both ensure investment in our children's future and provide a basic level of financial support to families. It also shows that doing so would cost well under a penny in every pound of*

national income by the end of the decade. Not only can we afford to do this – we can't afford not to."

68. Coram remains grateful to the Inquiry for the opportunity to participate in the important work of Module 8.

Dated: 28 November 2025

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Instructed pro bono by Jenner & Block London LLP