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The month that reset children's social care?

May was a major month for children's social care. England's independent review into the system published its recommendations followed days later by a safeguarding review into the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.

Together they point to the creation of community-based 'family help teams' and specialist multi-agency child protection investigative units.

It's not a split between family help and child protection, stresses the safeguarding review – but it is as near as.

There is much to debate in the children's social care review. For instance, do the Buurtzorg-like family help teams pave the way for a devolution of social work into social enterprises, as trialled – and largely rejected – a decade ago via social work practices?

There's also an implicit criticism of university social work education in the report.

That aside, a renewed focus on early intervention and helping families stay together is cause for optimism. The review also recognises the need to support social workers and for more money – £2.6 billion in the first five years and £1 billion a year thereafter.

The question remains, however: will the government prioritise funding for this? And will it tackle the underlying cause of so many social issues: poverty and inequality?



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