

*These notes refer to the Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (c.18) which received Royal Assent on 27 April 2022*

# Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### **Part 2 – Children Order Amendments**

##### *Section 123 – Corporate parenting principles*

Section 123 defines corporate parenting principles in legislation by inserting a new Article 26A into the Children Order. It introduces seven key needs (collectively known as corporate parenting principles) which authorities must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked after children, relevant children and former relevant children (otherwise known as looked after children and care leavers).

*Paragraph (1)* of new Article 26A requires an authority, in carrying out their functions in relation to the persons to whom this Article applies, to have regard to the need:

- to act in their best interests of, and to promote their well-being;
- to encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take account of their views, wishes and feelings;
- to help them gain access to and get the best use of the services provided by an authority, and by any relevant partner;
- to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for them;
- for them to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

*Paragraph (2)* sets out the persons to whom Article 26A applies – looked after children, relevant children (as defined in Article 34B(2)) and former relevant children (as defined in Article 34D(1)).

*Paragraph (3)* defines a “relevant partner” as a “children’s authority” and “other children’s service provider” within the meaning given by section 9 of the

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Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and "well-being" has the meaning given by section 1 of that Act. The intention is to strengthen links to that Act and the duty to co-operate that it provides.

*Paragraph (4)* requires an authority to have regard to any guidance given by the Department as to the performance of the duty under paragraph (1).