

Press release: Leader of the Commons to Chair Ministerial Group on Family Support from Conception to the Age of Two

The Prime Minister has asked Andrea Leadsom MP to chair a cross-Government ministerial group which will seek to identify gaps in available provision and make recommendations on how coordination across Departments can be improved.

Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP said: "I am delighted the Prime Minister has asked me to explore what more the Government can do to ensure we act early to help every child get the best possible start in life.

"The vital importance of supporting the first 1,001 days from conception to the age of two has been a long-standing passion of mine. A baby's earliest experiences determine their lifelong emotional health, so a secure early start can protect young people from later mental health problems and contribute significantly to reducing major social harms."

"I am greatly looking forward to exploring with ministerial colleagues what more the Government can do to improve the cradle-to-grave effects that result from better outcomes in this critical period of our lives."

The review will build on recent Government policy in this area including NHS England's Maternity Transformation Programme, expanding provision for perinatal mental health care, building parents' confidence to begin the learning process from the home, and supporting thousands of families with access to free childcare.

This includes:

- Record investment in early years education and childcare support of around £6 billion by 2020
- £365 million investment to enable 30,000 more women to access appropriate, high-quality specialist perinatal mental health care by 2020/21
- 15 hours per week of free early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds – nearly 750,000 children have benefited from this support
- Ensuring parents in this critical period can benefit from up to £39 million being invested to reduce parental conflict through evidence-based intervention.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The membership of the cross-party working group will be: Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP (Lord President of the Council, Leader of the House of Commons); Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP (Chief Secretary to the Treasury);

Justin Tomlinson MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance); Nadhim Zahawi MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families); Jackie Doyle-Price MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health and Inequalities); Rishi Sunak MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Local Government).

2. For media enquiries, please contact commonsleader@cabinetoffice.gov.uk