



Association of **Lawyers for Children**

Promoting justice for children and young people

Response to national rollout of Child Focused Courts

The Deputy Prime Minister, David Lammy, has announced the national rollout of the family court Private Law Pathfinder model, now called the Child Focused Model.

The ALC welcomes this announcement - the model shows promise in achieving quicker resolution of family court proceedings for children, and allows the voice of the child to be heard at an earlier stage.

Practitioners in areas where the model has been piloted continue to report that there are aspects of the model that are not functioning as intended. These issues must be addressed if the model is to achieve its promise, operate swiftly but fairly, and meaningfully contribute to the government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy.

The ALC will continue its engagement with the Ministry of Justice and others in respect of the implementation of the model. We also observe that the model will not achieve genuinely transformative change in the family justice system unless it is accompanied by wider reform and adequate funding of the chronically under-resourced legal aid scheme, and proper funding of Cafcass and the family courts.

Lorraine Cavanagh KC and Jamie Niven-Phillips

Co-chairs, Association of Lawyers for Children

24 March 2026