

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 6 - the Children's Commissioner

Section 113: Annual reports

450. This section amends section 8 of the 2004 Act, which is concerned with the Commissioner's annual report. The annual report provides a key mechanism through which Parliament has the opportunity to scrutinise the Commissioner's activities and impact. The annual report provides an overview of the Commissioner's activities rather than being a vehicle through which the Commissioner makes recommendations for change in specific areas; which will be contained in the separate reports that the Commissioner chooses to publish following his or her investigations or inquiries.
451. Accordingly, section 8 requires the Commissioner to report annually on the main activities that he or she has undertaken and what impact these activities have had on the promotion and protection of children's rights. New subsection (2)(b) and (c) require the Commissioner to include in the annual report information on: the actions that he or she has taken to support children falling within section 8A; and an account of how the Commissioner has consulted or otherwise involved children in the discharge of his or her functions.
452. *Subsection (2)(a)* of the section amends section 8(1) of the 2004 Act to provide that the annual report must address how the Commissioner has discharged all his functions. New subsection (2)(d) has been included to ensure that actions the Commissioner takes as a result of consulting or otherwise involving children are also summarised in the annual report. *Subsections (4) and (5)* provide for the Commissioner to lay the annual report before both Houses of Parliament, rather than through the Secretary of State, as was previously the case. The Commissioner is responsible for publishing, publicising and disseminating the report, as appropriate. *Subsection (6)* requires the Commissioner to ensure that a child-friendly version of the annual report is available.