



A Family Revolution

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The Family Commission is *Starting a Family Revolution*

10,000 families throughout Britain: 18 months inquiry:
Chaired by Esther Rantzen CBE: Asking the big questions:

- What is family life like today?
- How important is the family to you?
- What holds you back?
- What would help you get on?

Family Life has changed dramatically but families are still immensely important to us.

Starting a Family Revolution argues that...

- Families often feel ignored, left to it and distanced from decision making
- Are resilient and able but feel held back by bureaucratic systems and processes
- Are assets - Have solutions but are not asked
- Want to do more – to take more of a lead in shaping decisions but need others to help
- Want professionals to work “with” them

It calls for a new dynamic between families and the state

- Recognise and work with the potential in all families, including those in crisis, to develop their own sustainable solutions
- Recognise the untapped value of extended families as assets
- Requires professionals to work *with*, not 'for', families – at an early enough point to make a genuine difference
- Recognise that families often initially prefer help from their peers, friends and relatives

Empowers and engages families

A system which recognises....

- Many solutions lie within the family – from day to day support to long term caring
- Most families can function better if they get the right help
- We have to stop fixating on the 2% of families who are not able to function
- That families are helped most if they are helped early
- Non stigmatised support that does not feel like force

What would this mean in practice?

- Recognition of extended families across services
- Workplace that understand families responsibilities and works with it
- Parenting and family support – throughout childhood
- Children's Centres to extend to involve all families and older children – with Peer to Peer support
- Local neighbourhoods that involve families and reflect their needs

When crisis hits...

- Help early to prevent crisis
- A strengths based approach
- Support workers 'on their side'
- Family group conferences
- Family intervention projects
- A greater emphasis on kinship care

We want to put everyone to the Family Test

But there are big challenges for all those that can make it happen...

- All government departments, nationally and locally
- For lawyers and the courts
- For schools and health professionals
- For social services
- For family professionals
- For all of us as individuals...

“The danger is that we have forgotten that families are a huge resource. If ‘Every Child Matters’, and of course they do, we at the Family Commission believe it is time to adopt a new approach, to ask a deeper, more searching question. “What matters to every child?” And the answer is: the family.”

Esther Rantzen CBE

So what could this mean for children and families?

- An enabling state
- An ability for children and families to shape and influence local decisions and environments
- An opportunity for children and families to form their own networks of support and initiatives
- Engaged communities that are contributing and supporting children and families
- An environment where children and families can flourish