

The nanny state

1 JACKIE BAPTISTE'S working day begins at seven o'clock, when she goes to a council house, drags someone else's children out of bed and packs them off to school. The social worker is not a woman to be trifled with. "They might tell me to F-off, but it's only words," she shrugs. Sometimes she films the desperate attempts of a mother to control her brood, then plays the recording back, offering tips on how to do it right. She attends parent-teacher meetings, appointments with doctors and counselling for alcoholism and domestic violence, all the while holding the hands of her adult charges. In a typical week she will see the same family five or six times, as part of Westminster council's Family Recovery Programme. She is part of a growing movement, and the product of a remarkable political consensus.

2 The state has long meddled with poor families. In his autobiography, Charlie Chaplin recalls that on entering a London workhouse, he and his brother Sydney were sent off to the children's wing while his mother went to the women's wing, a separation that had been routine since the Poor Law of 1834. There were still several thousand children living in such places when the last ones were abolished in the 1940s and Britain began building a comprehensive welfare state. In the decades since, the government has acquired many more children, though it houses them differently. There are currently 66,000 children in care, meaning they have been removed (voluntarily or otherwise) from their biological parents. The majority are shuffled between short-term placements with foster families.

3 This is where the new scheme comes in. For although taking children from their parents may sometimes be the least bad thing to do, the government is, in aggregate, a deadbeat, feckless parent. Children who have been in care are 50 times more likely to go to prison than those who have not, according to calculations by Policy Exchange, a think-tank. They are also 66 times more likely to see their own children taken into care. This is not for lack of money: the average bill for taking a child under the state's wing is £38,000 (\$61,400) per year. Better, then, to employ a latter-day Mary Poppins to nanny a family into staying together.

4 Parents who are at risk of losing their children, their liberty and their housing can choose to enroll in Westminster's programme. Most of those eligible have decided to do so. "We say: 'Those people over there want to take your house and your child away. We want to



work with you to make sure that does not happen'," explains Natasha Bishopp, who is in charge of the scheme. Each family signs a contract. If its terms are broken, the council does what it would have done anyway. So far that has happened to just 15% of the 210 contracts signed since 2008.

5 Part of the reason for this success, Ms Bishopp argues, is that people who are constantly pestered by the government's agencies tend to experience its sanctions either as empty threats or as sudden and mystifying. The contract helps overcome that, as does embodying the state in the form of a single, smiling individual. Gail Porter, who runs similar schemes for Lancashire Council, reports one of the families her team works with had previously received visits from 21 separate agencies. The results of these programmes and others like them have encouraged the government to launch a national Troubled Families Programme. Central government will provide £4,000 per family and local authorities a further £6,000 in the hope of improving the lives of 120,000 families during the next three years.

6 This points to an interesting situation in British politics. For all that Labour likes to paint the Tories as a heartless bunch intent on slashing welfare and the Conservatives retort that Labour would trap the poor on state benefits for ever, the two parties have 28 to help the poorest and most dysfunctional families.

7 For Conservatives, the promise of keeping families together trumps traditional concerns about an interfering state. Tories also like the programme's focus on teaching people how to take responsibility for their own lives, and its promise of saving money in the long term. The party that rails against the nanny state has come to embrace state nannying. Ms Baptiste thus enjoys cross-party support for her afternoon task: taking a pair of Marigold gloves from her bag and helping one of her families to tidy up its messy flat.

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Tekst 6 The nanny state

- 1p 24 How does the writer introduce the topic of this text in paragraph 1?
A by demonstrating the many tasks involved in parenting nowadays
B by describing how the authorities try to aid troubled families
C by giving examples of hostile situations welfare workers encounter
D by implying that the interference of social workers is frowned upon
- 1p 25 Why does the writer refer to Charlie Chaplin?
A to demonstrate the longstanding bad reputation of social services in Britain
B to emphasise that children are still separated from their parents in family crises
C to illustrate the role the British government has played in the history of social care
D to prove that having been in the care system is not an obstacle to success
- 1p 26 “the new scheme” (eerste regel alinea 3)
Wat is het doel van de nieuwe aanpak?
Leg uit in je eigen woorden.
- 2p 27 “Part of the reason for this success” (alinea 5)
De Westminster-aanpak blijkt succesvol te zijn.
Aan welke twee factoren heeft de aanpak zijn succes te danken volgens mevrouw Bishopp?
- 1p 28 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?
A ambivalent attitudes on how
B been prevailed upon in the end
C come to similar conclusions about the way
D reluctantly acknowledged their responsibility
E strongly encouraged nannies
- 1p 29 How can the tone of the last sentence be described best?
A critical
B matter-of-fact
C relieved
D tongue-in-cheek

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.