

Scottish Government's Children and Young People (Scotland) Act. As part of the new law, the NHS will appoint a health worker to act as a 'named person' for every child until the age of five.

The responsibility will then pass to councils until the child reaches 18, with teachers expected to be

'Claims of support are plain wrong'

asked to take on the role. The measure is designed to ensure any potential cases of abuse or developmental difficulties are spotted and acted upon at an early stage. But there has been bitter opposition to the level of state intrusion, and critics claim it will breach the European Convention on Human Rights.

The latest poll results are another blow to the scheme following warnings that it could have a hidden £30million cost.

A nursing union has said an extra 450 health visitors are needed to implement the policy and the law does not address these extra costs. According to the Royal College of Nursing, it costs £40,729 to train a nurse and a further £29,759 for the extra year's study required to become a health visitor.

This would cost £18.3million in nursing training costs alone, excluding the additional year, plus £13.4million in annual salaries.

But the Bill does not break down

1,000 Scots, carried out last week, asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the 'named person' proposal.

Only 20.9 per cent said they were in agreement and 23 per cent said they 'neither agree nor disagree'. Nearly half - 47.9 per cent - were opposed to the idea, including 27.4 per cent who strongly disagreed. Don't knows were 8 per cent.

Among those who voted SNP in the 2011 Holyrood election, 44.8 per cent opposed the changes.

The policy is set to become mired in legal action after critics this week confirmed they will sue the Scottish Government 'in defence of family life'.

Last night a spokesman for the Evangelical Alliance Scotland said: 'The results of the poll vindicate Evangelical Alliance Scotland. It demonstrates that the state guardians provision of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill is undemocratic.'

'The Government has remained deafeningly silent on many questions, the chief among them is what happens when there is a disagreement between parents and state guardians? Who wins? Who ultimately has the final say with regard to raising children - the parents or the state?'

But a Scottish Government spokesman said the named person role had been widely supported since its introduction in the Highlands and the measures in the new Act would support children and families across Scotland.

SECRECY AND INTRUSION BY STATE IS ALARMING

I STRONGLY oppose the named person provision and I have set up an online petition against it.

I have for many years worked on research issues relating to societal freedoms and the over-regulation of the young. I find it incredible how the state is interfering in our lives. The secrecy inbuilt in these plans is a concern. It will take little to trigger an investigation into a child, potentially creating a false picture.

So-called 'guardians' won't be required to act only when confronted by a serious issue, but merely on their 'concerns' over a situation. Health and safety zealots could make good parents fair game over everything from what their children have in their lunchboxes to cycling to school without a helmet. I can foresee deep suspicion created between parents and teachers, who will be the main guardians.

Worryingly, it also seems there is increasingly no longer a sense of autonomy of the family.

It has become normal for 'professionals' to believe they always know best when it comes to bringing up other people's children. All sorts of

things previously seen as insignificant could achieve a significance they do not merit.

Could, for example, shouting at a child be a form of emotional abuse? It might be seen as such by some.

There is also at the heart of all this an assumption that all parents must need some kind of support - and that is condescending.

I do not believe the motivation for this initiative is deliberately sinister. I do, however, believe it is misguided, excessive and potentially obsessive.

More worryingly, because of it, we may not see the wood for the trees - and the vulnerable will be lost in the overwhelming numbers whose lives are overseen by guardians looking for problems that don't exist.

Dr Wailon was speaking as a private individual. His online petition is at www.petitions.com/petition/no-to-state-guardians



Concern from parents: Liz Smith

the funding leading to fears about the total cost of the scheme.

Scottish Conservative young people spokesman Liz Smith said: 'I am not in the least bit surprised by these findings.'

'They are exactly in line with the feedback we have received from parents and... they demonstrate very clearly that the Scottish Government has been completely wrong in its suggestion that the vast majority of people want this policy. That is just plain wrong.'

'The Scottish Government was intent on pushing through this policy without thinking through its implications and its cost.'

The Survation poll of more than