CordisPulse

February 2021

Welcome to February's edition of the CordisPulse – a monthly digest of key research and policy developments across the sectors in which Cordis Bright provides research and consultancy services, i.e. adult social care and health, children and young people's services, and criminal justice.

As Pulse readers may know we are currently working across a number of regions supporting the integration of health and social care innovation through theory-based, realist and real-time evaluation approaches.

We are currently working closely with clients exploring the opportunities presented by NHSE's Integrating Care: Next steps to building strong and effective integrated care systems across England. As such, this month we were really interested in the King's Fund written submission as part of the consultation exercise on this publication which can be seen here.

The King's Fund paper, although broadly supportive of placing Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) on a statutory footing, highlighted several areas that require addressing further including: (1) providing more detail to underpin legislative options; (2) the potential disruption to the health and care system that achieving change by 2022 may have particularly in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) recognition of the limitations of what legislation can achieve. Concerning the latter point the King's Fund highlighted the importance of achieving cultural change and associated development of relationships and behaviours which support collaboration across the system. This is a common area of focus in the evaluations we undertake to support clients with integration.

From our own experience in evaluating the local care approach in Greater Manchester, we have seen the benefits of integration at a locality and neighbourhood level. There are many examples of the statutory health and care sectors and the voluntary community and social enterprise sector coming together in innovative ways to deliver services for the benefit of local communities. We hope that, with the planned merger of CCGs and the transfer of powers to ICS level, these advances will not be lost and that local areas will be empowered to address the needs of their population. We also think that without having a plan to put social care on a sustainable footing integration will continue to be undermined as cash-

strapped local authorities struggle to meet growing demand and pressure on the NHS continues.

We look forward to continuing to work across systems to support integration which we believe continues to be a key driver for change in improving quality and effectiveness of how services operate and the experience of the end user.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this month's Pulse, please do contact us on 020 7330 9170 or email stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk.

Best wishes,

Dr Stephen Boxford

Head of Research

Cordis Bright News

Cordis Briefing Excerpts: January 2021

On 28th January 2021 Cordis Bright held our quarterly briefing for independent sector providers of adult social care and supported housing. This briefing:

- Provides succinct analysis of key policy developments within social care services for adults and their implications for providers.

- Pairs it with guidance and practical advice about positioning your organisation to respond effectively.

- Gives insight into the intentions of commissioners and policymakers and looks at how your organisation could maximise the impact of its response.

- Explores strategic and operational implications.

This month, the Briefing featured presentations on COVID-19; the estimated return to normality; local authority financial stability; and public spending.

Excerpts from the full set of slides are available here, and a video of the Briefing is available on YouTube.

A full set of slides is available for subscribers to the Cordis Briefing: please click here for more information.

Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

St. Mungo's. Housing and health: Working together to respond to rough sleeping during COVID-19.

This report presents the findings of new research into the health needs of people sleeping rough in England and their vulnerability to Covid-19, and the approach taken to address the health and housing needs of this group during the pandemic. The report is informed by St. Mungo's knowledge as a service provider and by the lived experience of their clients.
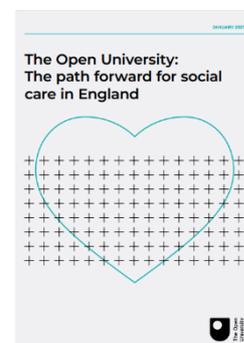
Covid-19 has exposed, and in some cases exacerbated existing health inequalities in the UK. People who are homeless have worse health than most, and yet they find it harder to get the healthcare they need. During the pandemic, the Government recognised the significant threat to health posed by sleeping on the street and in communal shelters. Through focusing on getting 'everyone in' and providing safe accommodation, many lives were saved.

Therefore, St. Mungo's emphasise the need to build on the successes of Everyone In and ensure that the principles of joint working become the norm.

Open University. The path forward for social care in England.

The Open University is calling for significant reform in adult social work and social care to aid the sectors' recovery from COVID-19. In a survey of leaders across England, the Open University has found that the sectors are facing significant challenges in the shape of skills shortages, as 44 per cent of respondents said they had only the bare minimum of skills to operate, or lacked vital skills to run their operations successfully.

The challenges of attracting and retaining talent can be seen most acutely within third-sector social care, where 57 per cent of employers report that they are currently working with minimum staffing levels or below. Whilst battling these significant staffing shortages, the sectors have also had to keep up with rapid change brought about by COVID-19 and its impact on services and operations, with more than two thirds (67%) now requiring different skills to those they were prioritising before the pandemic.

In this report, the OU's School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, has made a number of recommendations to employers, sector leaders and policy makers which could help the sector weather the ongoing difficulties it faces.

Bevan Foundation. Social isolation and loneliness: the impact of shielding in Merthyr Tydfil.
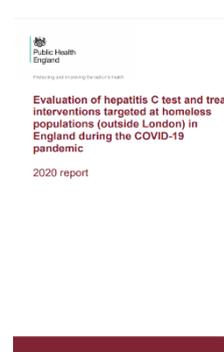
Social isolation and loneliness are longstanding challenges, however this report finds that those who are shielding are at particular risk.

This report examines social isolation and loneliness and the impact of shielding in Merthyr Tydfil. It sets out social isolation and loneliness and impact of shielding recommendations to support people who have been shielding in Merthyr Tydfil county borough. It draws on interviews with people with direct experience of shielding, stakeholders, and the Bevan Foundation's own research on shielding.

Public Health England. Evaluation of Hepatitis C Test and Treat interventions targeted at homeless populations (outside London) in England during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a blood borne viral infection of the liver that disproportionately affects people who are homeless. The initiative to house homeless people (outside London) in England during the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for HCV care providers to access these vulnerable individuals for testing and treatment.

This report provides an evaluation of some of these interventions and makes recommendations for future service delivery. Thus, it is of use to a wide audience including: HCV care providers and commissioners, organisations providing services for homeless people and public health professionals.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. UK Poverty 2020/21.

This is the 2020/21 edition of JRF's annual report on the nature and scale of poverty across the UK, and how it affects people struggling to stay afloat.

This report highlights early indications of how poverty has changed in society since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, as well as the situation revealed by the latest poverty data, collected before the outbreak. It examines overall changes to poverty, with sections looking at the impact of work, the social security system and housing. It also benefits from insights from members of JRF's Grassroots Poverty Action Group, who have direct experience of living on a low income.
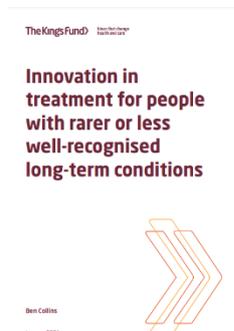
The King's Fund. Innovation in treatment for people with rarer or less well-recognised long-term conditions.

This paper investigates how five specialist hospital services in the UK are innovating in care for people with rarer or less well-recognised long-term conditions.

The analysis describes how these services are innovating to improve care for the people who access them and deliver more holistic care that addresses individuals' biomedical, psychological and social needs.

The paper draws out possible learning for other services working with people with long-term conditions.

Public Health Wales. Annual Equality Report 2019-20.

This annual report provides a summary of the equality, employment and monitoring information relating to Public Health Wales' workforce, and details some of the work undertaken to advance equality within its teams. Public Health Wales recognise that continuing to improve is vital to the ongoing success of their organisation and the people that they serve.

Care Quality Commission. Collaboration in urgent and emergency care.

In the autumn of 2020, the CQC analysed the ways in which providers were working together in health and social care's urgent and emergency care (UEC) services. Winter and the pandemic now place UEC services under exceptional pressure. It is against this context that this report publishes examples of innovative and creative approaches to urgent and emergency care.

Briefings

NHS Digital. Mental Health Bulletin 2019-20 Annual Report.

This publication provides a detailed picture of people who used NHS funded secondary mental health, learning disabilities and autism services in England during the financial year 2019-20.

Its key findings were:

- 5.1% of people in England were known to be in contact with secondary mental health, learning disabilities and autism services during this year.

- 3.6% (104,536) of people known to be in contact with secondary mental health, learning disabilities and autism services spent time in hospital as part of being in contact with these services during 2019-20

NHS Digital. Statistics on Drug Misuse, England 2020.

This report presents newly published information on hospital admissions attributable to drug-related mental health and behavioural disorders and on hospital admissions attributable to poisoning by illicit drugs.

The report also provides links to information on drug misuse among both adults and children from a variety of sources, including the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System and the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

The King's Fund. Response to NHS England and NHS Improvement on proposed changes to integrated care systems.

The King's Fund have produced a written submission to NHS England and NHS Improvement on the proposed changes to integrated care systems across England. As well as focusing on the implications of the proposals for possible changes to legislation, they have highlighted areas where further detail or clarification is required.

Tools and Guidance

NHS England. Communications toolkit for local maternity teams to improve communications with Black, Asian and minority ethnic women.

NHS England's Maternity Transformation programme has produced a toolkit to support local maternity systems to enhance communication with diverse groups and communities.

This toolkit provides suggestions about how to communicate with women of different backgrounds, about the extra support that is available to them, as well as signposting to currently available publications, messaging, insights and templates.

Local Government Association. Changes to local authority powers and duties: Health protection and business COVID security resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020.

This is a guide to the provisions of the Health Protection Regulations 2020, and to new, modified or suspended local government powers and duties applicable to local authorities in England only up to 31st December 2020. It is a guide and not legal advice and so if you are unsure or have any concerns about the meaning of or applicability of the Act or any of the provisions made under the Act, the LGA advise seeking detailed legal advice.

NHS England. Violence prevention and reduction standard.

This guidance discusses the new national violence prevention and reduction standard, which complements existing health and safety legislation. Employers (including NHS employers) have a general duty of care to protect staff from threats and violence at work.

The standard has been developed in partnership with the Social Partnership Forum and its subgroups, including trade unions and the Workforce Issues and Violence Reduction Groups. It was endorsed by the Social Partnership Forum on 15 December 2020. The standard delivers a risk-based framework that supports a safe and secure working environment for NHS staff, safeguarding them against abuse, aggression and violence.

Children and Young People's Services

Reports

National Foundation for Educational Research. Impact of school closures and subsequent support strategies on attainment and socio-emotional wellbeing.

This study, conducted by statisticians and assessment researchers at NFER, estimates the impact on attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 in England following the disruption to schooling caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during the spring and summer terms of 2020. It also aims to determine the parts of the curriculum that children are struggling with. In addition, another strand of the work looks at the development of pupils' social skills and wellbeing.

This interim paper is the first in a series of papers in this study, and provides the first insight into two of the study's research questions:

- To what extent has pupils' attainment in reading and maths been impacted by school closures in 2020? This is referred to as the 'Covid-19 gap'.

- Were children eligible for free school meals (FSM) disproportionately affected? This is referred to as the 'disadvantage gap' in attainment between pupils who are eligible and not eligible for free school meals.

The results in this first paper focus on assessments taken by Year 2 pupils (i.e. pupils aged 6 – 7) in autumn term 2020 sat by nearly 6000 pupils in 168 schools.

Sutton Trust. Learning in lockdown.

During the first lockdown, research from the Sutton Trust found that children's experiences of remote learning varied substantially across different socio-economic backgrounds. There is a risk that years of work to reduce the attainment gap and tackle social mobility could be undone in just a few months.

This research brief looks at the situation for pupils at the beginning of the second period of school closures. Survey data from Teacher Tapp and YouGov give an up-to-date picture of how teaching is being delivered remotely, as well as access to resources, and barriers faced while learning at home. The report also looks at how the impacts of the pandemic on education and social mobility can be minimised.

Department for Education. Children's social care cost pressures and variations in unit costs.

This report brings together findings from a recent data collection template completed by 13 local authorities in England (termed here the cost pressures survey) and existing research evidence to explore the unit costs of providing children's social care services.

The findings from existing research are focused on the use of a bottom-up unit costing methodology to explore different parts of the children's social care system and to identify, and account for variations, based on qualitative responses from the cost pressures survey. The focus of this report is on all children in need, including those who are looked after. The findings are also positioned within the wider evidence base covering issues related to demand and expenditure on children's social care.

NSPCC. Volunteering with vulnerable families: a rapid review of the literature.

This report from the NSPCC explores the evidence about recruiting volunteers to support vulnerable families. They commissioned independent researchers to review relevant literature from the NSPCC and other key sources, focusing on information published since 2012.
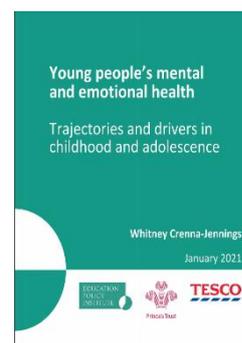
The literature review considers why volunteers are recruited and examines the benefits and challenges of volunteer deployment. It also looks at the support volunteers can offer families facing challenging circumstances, and the operational and strategic considerations of setting up volunteer support systems.

Education Policy Institute. Young people's mental and emotional health: Trajectories and drivers in childhood and adolescence.

The Education Policy Institute (EPI) and The Prince's Trust have published a report on the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Generation Z.

Based on data from the Millennium Cohort Study, and supported by Tesco, the report reveals new insights into the determinants of young people's wellbeing, including how it is affected by their relationships, background, and use of social media. The study examines the personal experiences of young people in England, at age 11, 14 and 17. This is supplemented by focus group responses from November 2020.

The research shows that while the wellbeing of all young people declines by the end of their teenage years, there is a strong gender divide within this: girls see far lower

levels of wellbeing and self-esteem than boys – driven by a sharp fall of both during mid-adolescence.

Based on the new findings, researchers determine that the experience of the pandemic is likely to continue to exacerbate existing mental health and wellbeing problems among young people. National estimates show that 1 in 6 young people now have a probable mental illness – up from 1 in 9. Therefore, researchers fear that the increased isolation seen over the last year risks causing long-term damage to the wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of young people.

Education Policy Institute. Education research and evaluation in leading education nations: How nations organise, focus and fund their research for policymaking.

The Education Policy Institute has published an evidence review of how leading education nations (Australia, Finland, Japan, Scotland and Singapore), approach education research and evaluation, commissioned by Patrick Wall, founder of EDPOL.

The primary focus of the paper is how leading countries organise, focus and fund their education research and evaluation, both in the context of major system change and in terms of how each country assesses the effectiveness of its education system.

For each country, the report outlines the existing education research landscape and how it fits with policymaking. This has involved building a picture of the major institutions and their relationship to government; how they are funded, including an attempt to assess the magnitude of this funding in the context of other government spending; and how their research priorities are set.

Briefings

Children's Commissioner. The state of children's mental health services 2020/21.

Children have had major disruption to two years of education, and have had extremely limited opportunities to see friends and wider families, to play and enjoy activities. More than this, many will have been very worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their families. Taken together, this cocktail of risks and stresses appears to have taken a very heavy toll on some children.

The data in this briefing covers the period up to end of March 2020, so largely pre-COVID, but what it shows is a system without the necessary capacity or flexibility to respond to such seismic events in the lives of children.

Children's Commissioner. Too many at-risk children are still invisible to social care.

Since March 2020 when schools closed at the start of the first national lockdown, more families have fallen into poverty and all the major risk factors to children – domestic violence, poor parental mental health, and alcohol/substance abuse – have heightened.

At the same time there has been a significant fall (by 10% compared to the last 3 years) in referrals to children's services as children became increasingly 'invisible' under Covid-19. Children have been out of school for most of the year, less likely to attend health services, and are less able to access informal support like children's centres, many of which closed or moved online throughout the year.

Many local authorities anticipated a spike in social care referrals in September with the school return. However, data from the DfE showed that in November 2020, referrals were 12% lower than usual – despite schools being open at this time, so better able to identify vulnerable children.

The Children's Commissioner's believes that that all local areas need to be urgently and proactively working to identify vulnerable children who are not coming to the attention of services as they would usually do. Otherwise, children at risk in increasingly harmful situations will remain invisible to the system.

Sutton Trust. Remote learning: the digital divide.

With the majority of children in the UK now learning from home as part of another national lockdown, addressing the digital divide is more important than ever. Ofcom estimated that at the start of the pandemic, 1.8 million children were without adequate access to devices, and almost a million were without an acceptable connection to the internet; the majority of these coming from low-income families.

Sutton Trust's polling in March 2020 found that there was a significant divide between children attending private schools and those attending state schools in terms of digital access. This updated polling, conducted in early January by TeacherTapp, finds that this situation has not substantially improved.

Action for Children. The Care Review launch.

Action for Children are launching a Care Review which will look at a wide range of experiences of children and young people, from the beginning stages when they are first referred to social care, to children who need to go into foster care or children's homes.

The review will look at how children's social care works with key partner agencies, including the police and health bodies. Domestic violence continues to be the most common factor of need identified at the end of relevant children's social care assessments. If children are to be supported as they should be, key agencies have to understand the impact of domestic abuse on children.

The review will be conducted with the participation of 'experts by experience'. This will allow members to share ideas on the best way to gather the views of people with lived experience, and to help develop the recommendations the review will eventually lead to.

Action for Children are encouraging experts by experience to apply through their website to be part of the review.

Action for children. Adapting to a new world: supporting the youngest children and their families through the pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic has had an immeasurable impact on the lives of the youngest children and their families. When lockdown was announced in March 2020, Action for Children faced the challenge of continuing to provide early years support in unprecedented conditions. A key element of this response was digital: both the shift to digital provision of traditionally face-to-face services and the expansion of our existing digital services.

This briefing explores how they underwent that shift: the challenges faced, the opportunities that opened up, and, most importantly, the impact on children and families. It offers an insight into the advantages and limitations of more digital focused models of service delivery. It also charts the experiences of a specific local area in rapidly pivoting its approach to the delivery of early years services.

The briefing details the expansion and development of Action for Children's online parenting support service, Parent Talk. The key enablers of successful digital work, as well as the obstacles that must be considered and overcome, are also explored. This document demonstrates the need to centralise outcomes for children and families as part of any future decisions about early years service delivery.

Tools and Guidance

NSPCC. Coronavirus briefing: guidance for social workers

Social workers have an important role to play in protecting children from abuse and neglect, especially during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as many children are spending less time in school and more time at home.

This briefing summarises guidance from across the UK on how social workers and local authorities should work during the pandemic to ensure that children are protected. It answers questions including:

- How does the Coronavirus Act 2020 affect local authorities' responsibilities?

- How will the child protection system work during the pandemic?

- What is temporary registration and how does it work?

- Can social workers continue to visit children and families?

- How should support be prioritised?

- Do case reviews still need to be carried out?

Criminal Justice

Reports

Women's Aid. The Domestic Abuse Report 2021: The Annual Audit.

The Domestic Abuse Report 2021: The Annual Audit gives an overview of the domestic abuse support services available in England, including provision and usage, during the financial year 2019–20. This year it also gives an overview of the impact of Covid-19.
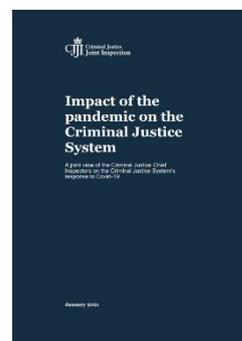
Key Findings

- Local service providers continue to support large numbers of women and children. In 2019-20 Women's Aid estimates that refuge services in England supported 10,592 women and 12,710 children and community-based services supported 103,969 women and 124,762 children

- Only 73.5% (50 out of 68) of the respondents providing refuge and 67.8% (40 out of 59) of those providing community-based support services were commissioned by their local authority

- Demand is still higher than the provision available, with 57.2% of refuge referrals declined during the year – 18.1% of all referrals were turned down due to lack of capacity in the refuge

- The number of spaces in refuge services in England still falls short of the number of spaces recommended by the Council of Europe by 1,694 spaces, which represents a 30.1% shortfall. An additional increase of 361 to 4,251 spaces by 1 November 2020 is due to temporary emergency funding which will soon come to an end

- Less than half of all vacancies posted on Routes to Support for England in 2019-20 were in rooms suitable for a woman with two children; only 4.0% could consider women who had no recourse to public funds.

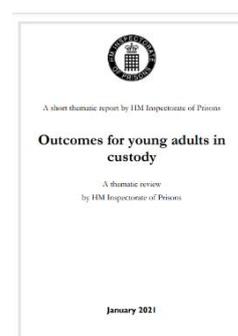### HMICFRS. Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System.

This report provides a cross-system view of how the CJS reacted in the immediate aftermath of the first national lockdown (23 March to 10 May 2020), and of how the system has managed since. All four criminal justice inspectorates have carried out inspections of their respective agencies' responses to Covid-19. This report sets out findings from these inspections, as well as cross-cutting themes, and highlights the successes, challenges and problems that the CJS has faced and still faces.

Findings are divided into those summarising the responses of agencies and the system to Covid-19, and those detailing our assessment of the continuing impact of these changes. The report highlights risks and innovative practice throughout, before concluding with a section on the greatest risk facing the CJS as it continues to respond to and recover from the pandemic.

HMIP. Outcomes for young adults in custody.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) undertook this thematic inspection after individual establishment reports and surveys highlighted concerns about outcomes for young adults in custody in England and Wales. HMIP sought to set out findings from recent inspections, analyse national data and explore what is being done, both at establishment and national level, to make sure that the needs of young adults are met within prisons and that they are being helped to move away from behaviour that poses a risk to themselves and others.

In general, the outcomes are poor for young adults when compared with those for older prisoners (those aged over 25). Young adults have worse relationships with staff, are less likely to be motivated by the behaviour management schemes and are far more likely to be involved in violent incidents. They are also more likely to face adjudications, to be placed on the basic regime and to self-harm. They report more negatively on day-to-day life, including relationships with staff, the quality of the food and the cleanliness of their wing.

In addition, young adults have worse attendance at education and work. Black and minority ethnic prisoners are significantly over-represented in the young adult prison population, and the perceptions of treatment among this group are particularly poor.

Briefings

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. Coal today, gone tomorrow: How jobs were replaced by prison places.

The geographical location of any given prison, whether it is newly built, or adapted from existing buildings, is something far less frequently reflected upon.

Since the 1960s, a number of prisons have been built on former industrial sites, with most of them located in the former industrial heartlands of England and Scotland. In particular, the authors find a strong concentration of new prison capacity in former coal-mining areas, associated with the traumatic economic restructuring and deindustrialisation of the 1980s.

"Regions where industrial employment was concentrated may expect to see economic restructuring", the authors write, "but if economic recovery is weak, the prison complex may come to replace the industrial complex".

This briefing points to is the interrelationship between governmental economic policies and the decision to site prisons in the industrial wastelands left in their wake.

Women in Prison. A national plan for tackling coronavirus in prisons.

This briefing is an update to Covid-19 & the Immediate Planned Release from Prison and follows the latest Government announcement of a national lockdown. This briefing also follows a dramatic increase in the number of people testing positive for coronavirus across the prison estate and the recent 51% spike in the number of coronavirus-related deaths in prison.

This briefing outlines the current issues facing women in prison and in the community during the pandemic and details Women in Prison's call on the Government to roll out a national plan for tackling coronavirus in prisons with a focus on three priority areas:

1. Health and protection of life

2. Release and resettlement

3. Improving digital access