



CordisPulse

April 2019

Welcome to April'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. children and young people's services, criminal justice, and adult social care and health.

A highlight of this edition is the Early Intervention Foundation's report on effective practice in evaluating Early Help, which is a really valuable resource. In our experience of evaluating Early Help – and other initiatives – we think that the six principles are an excellent basis for measuring and understanding the impact that has been achieved.

Based on our experience of delivering evaluations of Early Help, we were also pleased to see emphasis within the six principles on:

- Being clear from the outset about the amount or level of change that you are hoping to achieve. This ensures that the evaluation takes account of the original aspirations for an initiative or programme
- Considering building-in some form of cost-benefit analysis. In these times of significant financial constraints, it is often insufficient for Early Help to demonstrate improvements in outcomes: they also need to demonstrate cost-savings or cost-avoidance. Without this evidence, there is a risk that funding will be diverted to other, often more acute, services.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this month's Pulse please do contact us on 020 7330 9170.

Best wishes,

Dr Stephen Boxford



Head of Research

If you would prefer not to receive future editions of the CordisPulse, please click 'unsubscribe' at the very end of this email. If you would like to discuss anything that arises from the Pulse (or if there are others who you think would like to receive copies) then please contact Dr Stephen Boxford on stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk or 020 7330 9170.

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Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

Department of Health and Social Care. Chief Social Worker for Adults' annual report: 2018 to 2019

In this annual report, the Chief Social Worker for adults Lyn Romeo focuses particularly on the progress that has been as a result of the leadership development programme for Principal Social Workers (PSWs), which is now in its third year. The report found that Directors of Adult Social Services and PSWs have been successful in driving an organisational shift towards 'strengths based', integrated practice, within health and housing as well as social care. The report sets out a number of priorities for social work in 2019/20, including continuing to embed strengths-based practice, improving regulation of the profession through the development of Social Work England, and engaging with the government's Adult Social Care Green Paper, when published, to develop an improved care system.

Local Government Association. Public health transformation six years on

A key theme identified in this annual report is the progress made by council public health teams with regards to partnership working, in particular with districts and boroughs. While there has also been progress in partnership working with the NHS, the report expresses disappointment at what it sees to be too-great a focus on NHS priorities, such as reducing A&E attendances. Case studies in the report illustrate best practice with regards to services for children, with the aim of reducing the need for specialist child and adolescent mental and sexual health services. The report looks ahead to the government Green Paper on Prevention and stresses the need for government engagement with councils in developing the paper.



The King's Fund and the Nuffield Trust. Public satisfaction with the NHS and social care in 2018

The King's Fund, together with the Nuffield Trust, sponsor questions within the NatCen Social Research's British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, on public satisfaction with the NHS. This King's Fund reports that public satisfaction with the NHS has continued to fall in 2018 by 3 percentage points, to 53%. This is the lowest level of satisfaction since 2007. The four main reasons given for dissatisfaction were long waiting times, staff shortages, a lack of funding and wasted money.

Centre for Ageing Better. The State of Ageing in 2019

This report looks into the challenges facing those approaching old age in the UK, at a time when the number of people aged 65 and over in the population is rapidly increasing. The findings demonstrate major inequalities in the experience of later life in the UK. Major disparities exist in rates of chronic illness, mental health conditions, disability and frailty, depending on factors including ethnicity, area of residence, and income. Those in poorer parts of the country are dying earlier and becoming ill earlier. Particular future challenges identified in the report include the provision of independent housing for older people and creating spaces in the community to tackle social isolation among older generations.



Briefings

National Audit Office. NHS waiting times for elective and cancer treatment

NHS performance data is reported in this review against waiting times standards for elective and cancer care in England. These measures are chosen because cancer has been a focus of NHS efforts in relation to early referral and diagnosis, and because elective care is often delayed when the health care system is under strain. The review finds that the 18-week elective care standard was last met nationally in February 2016, and only met by 44% of trusts in 2018. Elective care waiting lists were found to be growing, and the number waiting more than 18 weeks grew from 153,000 to 528,000 in 2013-2018. Only 38% of trusts met the 62-day standard for cancer treatment in November 2018. The study also found significant variation in waiting times across geographical areas, providers and specialities.

The King's Fund. Payments and contracting for integrated care

Discussed in this briefing is the proposal made by NHS bodies of introducing payment schemes to incentivise single service providers, or partnerships of service providers, to deliver high quality integrated care. Mechanisms are to include whole population budgets, rewarding good performance in providers, and new arrangements to transfer risk and reward to providers. This study questions the likely success of these measures, by pointing out the difficulties involved in applying schemes developed for insurance-based health systems to those funded by tax payers with state-owned providers.



The Health Foundation. Failing to capitalise: Capital spending in the NHS

This study identifies a fall in capital spending by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in real terms, with funding increasingly being directed towards day-to-day running costs. The briefing suggests that this low level of capital investment will prevent the DHSC from developing the technology and data-driven health and social care system it has promised. Recommendations include raising capital funding in line with the OECD average, and ending transfers from capital to revenue budgets.

Tools and Guidance

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Work and Pensions. Causes of homelessness and rough sleeping: feasibility study

A rapid evidence assessment of the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping, as well as a review of existing models, inform this set of recommendations for developing models to estimate future trends in homelessness. Such models, it is suggested, could also be used to appraise the impact of proposed policy changes. The recommendations suggest a suite of models, rather than one multi-purpose model. The suite should include time-series models for accurate short-term forecasts, ad-hoc simulation models for appraising specific policies, and complex simulation models for medium to long term projections of different types of homelessness. Various specific recommendations are also made regarding consistency and data sharing across Local Authorities, linking data from distinct sources, and covering all types of homelessness.



Children and young people's services

Reports

Department for Education. 30 Hours Free Childcare: Evidence from the Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers.

The 30 hours free childcare policy was introduced in 2017, with the aim of reducing the cost of childcare to help working families. This report by the Department for Education states that the policy is dependent for its success upon engagement from all types of providers in the early years sector. The evidence presented suggests that this engagement was high, and that 90% of group-based providers, 67% of school nurseries and 77% of childminders were offering the 30 hours entitlement. Variation was found in this engagement, however, based on the area in which providers were located. For group-based providers, those in the 20% most deprived areas were less likely to make the offer than those in less deprived areas.

Centre for Child and Family Justice Research and Lancaster University. The contribution of supervision orders and special guardianship to children's lives and family justice.

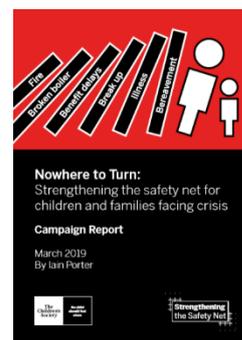
The focus of this report is on 'supervision orders' made by courts to support family reunification, when a child is at risk of significant harm as a result of poor parenting, and on 'special guardianship', when the child is placed with family or friends. Increased usage of such orders has come as a response to the too-high demand for care, meaning that efforts are being made to provide sustainable family-based alternatives to public care. The report, however, identifies issues with these alternatives. One concern is that 20% of cases in which children were subject to a standalone supervision order met the threshold for significant harm again. In addition, while most were found to be protected while the supervision order was in place, beyond the order its protective impact was seen to diminish, raising questions about how to provide longer term support for vulnerable families. A concern with regard to the special guardianship was that many were found to be untested prior to the final court hearing, and guardians were deemed not to be getting enough support.



Briefings

The Children's Society. Nowhere to Turn: Strengthening the safety net for children and families facing crisis

This research highlights the significant impacts of financial crises, such as running out of money for food or fuel, or a key household item breaking down, for families with children. The study focuses on Local Welfare Assistance Schemes (LWAS), funding for which has decreased since 2010/11. Many parts of the country, the study suggests, do not have an effective LWAS in place. Other statutory and voluntary sector organisations are reportedly trying to fill the gaps, but the result is a fragmented service. The study calls for faster and more proactive support for families in need. In particular, the recommendation is made for a new, ring-fenced funding allocation from central government for councils to provide LWAS.



PLOS One. Findings from an opt-in eye examination service in English special schools

This study supports previously published evidence of a very high prevalence of visual problems in children with complex needs. In addition, the study suggests a significant unmet need in this group, for whom routine vision screening is inappropriate, with regard to specialist eye care. The study reports on evaluation data from an opt-in school-based eye care service with the charity SeeAbility, which was provided across 11 special schools in England between 2013 and 2017. The findings suggest that this kind of targeted in-school eye care, as well as spectacle provision, should be made available to all children attending special schools.

Association of School and College Leaders. Survey into rising tide of pupil poverty

This article reports on a survey of 407 headteachers across England and Wales, which is said to have revealed a 'rising tide' of pupil poverty. 96% of respondents were said to have reported that the extent of pupil poverty had increased in the past few years. Schools are increasingly having to step in where poverty is evident, providing clothing, breakfast clubs, sanitary products, clothes washes and even food parcels for disadvantaged pupils. These findings have led the ASCL to claim in this article that schools have become an 'unofficial fourth emergency service for poor and vulnerable children'. This need has reportedly arisen due to cutbacks in local authority support for vulnerable families and young people, which 92% reported an awareness of. In addition, 98% of respondents reported difficulties in accessing local mental health services for pupils requiring treatment, and more pupils were seen to be requiring mental health support.

Ofsted. Implementation review of the social care common inspection framework

In this report, Ofsted assesses the extent to which the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) has focused on the things that matter most to children's lives and prioritised the work where most improvement is needed. The study reports that the framework has been well received and that inspectors appear to spend longer with children and less time looking at policies and procedures on inspection. Inspection reports are said to be better able to demonstrate the impact of providers on children's lives. The review also identifies a number of areas where further improvement is required, including ensuring that quality assurance activity is sufficiently focused on inspection practice.



Public Accounts Committee. Children in Care

The Public Accounts Committee warns of the slow progress made by the government on children's social care. It argues that the Department for Education (DfE) shows an 'alarming reluctance' to play the active leading role required of it in securing better services and outcomes for children in care. The DfE reportedly limits its role to passing legislation, publishing guidance and intervening after Ofsted has failed a local authority service. The report finds there to have been little improvement in outcomes for children in foster and residential care since 2009, and a lack of placement stability is raised as a key concern. The responsibility to achieve better outcomes for children in care should be more meaningfully shared, requiring more proactive leadership from the DfE, the report concludes.

Tools and Guidance

Early Intervention Foundation. Evaluating early help: A guide to evaluation of complex local early help systems

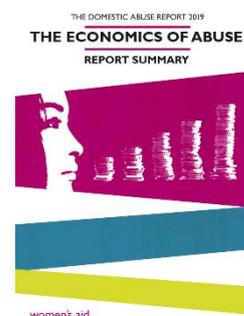
Early Intervention Foundation has released guidance on how to conduct impact evaluations of the systems that deliver local early help offers. This is a challenging exercise, due to the complex nature of such systems and the number of partners, programmes and services involved. The guide sets out six key principles for managers and commissioners to follow in order to find out what difference their services are making. One of the key recommendations is to ensure any needs assessment goes beyond assessing needs at a single point in time, to considering 'pathways of need' over time and for different families.

Criminal Justice

Reports

Women's Aid. The Domestic Abuse Report 2019: The economics of abuse

The annual Women's Aid 'Survivors' Voice Survey' found that 2/3 of respondents had experienced economic abuse, and nearly half reported that they had not had enough money to pay for basic essentials while with their abusive partner. Employment and education of the women was also reported to have suffered. In particular, the report focuses on the severe impact a lack of economic resources has in preventing women from leaving abusive relationships, and ensuring that those who do leave experience financial hardship, debt and often homelessness. The report states the importance of sustainable funding for specialist support services, in allowing them to provide the advice, advocacy and practical assistance necessary to support those facing economic abuse.



Centre for Women's Justice. Super-complaint: Police failure to use protective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls

This report addresses concerns surrounding four legal powers available to the police to provide protection to women at risk of violence, which the Centre for Women's Justice (CWJ) believes are being used inadequately. Drawing on accounts from eleven frontline organisations, CWJ reports that there has been a 'systemic failure' by the state to effectively safeguard vulnerable women. The first of the four reported issues is a failure to impose bail conditions on those suspected of rape, domestic abuse, harassment and stalking. The second concern is a lack of arrests for a breach of non-molestation orders, which are civil injunctions obtained by women making an application in the family court, to prevent the respondent from contacting them. Failure to use Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders, which place responsibility on the police to protect the survivor from violence, as well as too few applications for restraining orders being made at the end of the case, are the two further issues identified in the report. Under-resourcing of the police is one explanation offered for these recurrent failings.

Briefings

National Crime Agency. National Referral Mechanism Statistics

The National Referral Mechanism is a framework used by the police, public bodies and NGOs in identifying victims of modern slavery or human trafficking, and ensuring that they receive support. Data about the victims is also collected through this mechanism, with a view to increasing what is known about the threat posed by these crimes. The statistics discussed in this article show that the number of potential victims of trafficking and modern slavery reported to the authorities has risen by more than 80% in two years. The NCA Deputy Director Roy McComb states in the article that this increase is due to greater awareness and reporting of modern slavery, and so should be welcomed. He warns, however, that these figures are likely to represent only a snapshot of the true scale of the problem.

Local Government Association. Breaking the cycle of youth violence

This briefing reviews the challenge posed by the rising numbers of violent crimes in England and Wales. The challenge is significant, as the report states that there has been a 57% rise

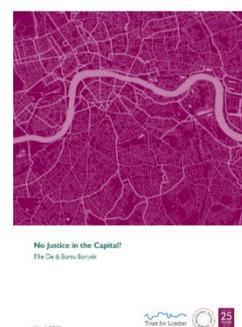
in police recorded knife crime between 2013/14 and 2017/18. The briefing looks at the promise of the ‘public health’ approach to violent crime, and the steps that councils should be taking. A review of programmes begun so far draws out best practice among councils. Some are reportedly developing universal interventions in response to this challenge, targeting whole populations, whereas others are attempting more targeted projects, helping young people at risk of exploitation by criminal networks.

National Audit Office. Transforming Rehabilitation: Progress review. Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service

This review by the National Audit Office (NAO) assesses the impact of the ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ reforms to probation services, implemented by the government in 2013. These reforms were intended to reduce reoffending through encouraging innovation in services and extending statutory rehabilitation to those serving sentences of less than 12 months. This report found that the ministry ‘set itself up to fail’ by rushing the implementation of the reforms, which included the creation of 21, later 15, mainly private sector Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), and a public sector National probation Service (NPS) for higher risk offenders. CRCs are found to have underinvested in probation services, innovation has not been forthcoming, and there has been friction between the NPS and CRCs. While the number of reoffenders has reduced, the average number of reoffences committed has increased. The CRC contracts are to be ended in 2020, but this comes at considerable cost to the tax payer. The review suggests that the government should refine its approach to contract management and assurance going forward, in order to reduce risk.

Revolving Doors Agency and Trust for London. No Justice in the Capital?

This study by charitable organisations Revolving Doors Agency and Trust for London reviews the impact of cuts to legal aid on those in London unable to afford solicitors’ fees. The study surveyed 30 individuals with lived experience of the ‘revolving door’ of personal crisis and crime, and asked about their experience of accessing legal aid since the introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012. If these findings are generalisable to the rest of London, the study suggests that 37,500 legal problems in areas of housing, family law, social care, welfare benefits and immigration had to be dealt with without any legal support since LASPO. The briefing suggests that a ‘two-tier justice system’ has been created due to the barriers faced to accessing justice by those in the ‘revolving door’.



Tools and Guidance

Local Government Association. Building cohesive communities

Through a review of evidence from councils across the country, this guide aims to help councils promote community cohesion within their boroughs. In particular, the guidance focuses on ensuring social integration in the context of increasing immigration, addressing the marginalisation of women and girls in some communities, as well as socio-economic exclusion and poor educational attainment in poor white British households. The guide looks at the tools and key service areas that can support councillor’s work in ensuring local cohesion, and focuses both on theoretical approaches and good practice collected from councils. Tools detailed cover areas of practice including effective use of data, equalities work, partnership working and commissioning, communications and good governance.



National Crime Agency. Protecting children from online sexual abuse and exploitation

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has released a new educational tool called 'Jessie and Friends' which is designed to be used by parents, carers and teachers to educate children aged 4-7 about staying safe online. While seemingly very young, this target age is deemed necessary as 19% of 3-4s and 43% of 5-7s are reported to own their own tablet. The tool is described as a 'fun, friendly and age-appropriate' education resource, which teaches children to identify unhealthy behaviours and ask for help when worried. The launch comes as the threat from online grooming increases. The NCA and UK police forces are currently arresting around 400 offenders a month and safeguarding 500 children, but are attempting to take action to prevent the situation deteriorating.

Ofsted. Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime

This Ofsted report takes lessons from a research project carried out in London, to produce a set of recommendations applicable to the whole country for keeping young people safe from knife crime. The recommendations cover six areas of practice and police for consideration by central and local government, as well as school leaders. These include guidance pertaining to improving partnership working and strategic planning, sharing and promoting good practice in relation to exclusions, coordinating early help and prevention, improving information-sharing, and teaching the curriculum in a way that helps children to achieve.