December 2020

Welcome to December'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.

As 2020 comes to an end, we wanted to take the opportunity to highlight our five year relationship with Blackpool Fulfilling Lives and to thank everyone involved in helping to make this such a rewarding and enjoyable project.

Our final, year 5 evaluation has recently been published (here) along with a video (here) exploring some of the key messages and learning from the evaluation. Funders and policy makers are increasingly recognising the challenges encountered by people facing multiple disadvantage, many of whom have experienced significant trauma. Our evaluation demonstrates the real and sustained differences that can be achieved for this group especially by services that are dedicated to working in evidence-based and co-productive ways. With a very real risk that Covid-19 results in this group of people growing over time, we hope there will continue to be opportunities to trial, embed and mainstream such ways of working into 2021.

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

Cordis Bright News

Evaluation of Blackpool Fulfilling Lives: year 5 Report

Cordis Bright has been the independent evaluation partner for Blackpool Fulfilling Lives since March 2014. We have followed the development of the project over its seven-year life and have evaluated its progress as it has evolved from a fledgling local partnership to playing a central role in developing a better system of services and support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage. We have produced five evaluation reports over the life of the project, with the early reports focusing on partnership development and relationship building and the most recent exploring in more detail which models of support work best for people facing multiple disadvantage. Our reports contain useful practical learning about the role of the navigator, who forms a relationship of trust with a small number of clients and acts as link between services; how to achieve systemic change at a local level; the role of people with lived experience in planning, commissioning and delivering services; the Housing First model, and the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of services such as Fulfilling Lives. We have been privileged to work in partnership with teams of peer researchers and the talented staff of Blackpool Fulfilling Lives to co-produce these evaluation reports.

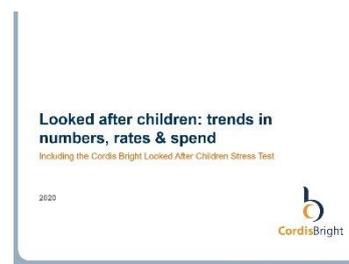The full report is available here.

Blackpool Fulfilling Lives: video

Jane Harris of Cordis Bright and James Devereaux of Blackpool Fulfilling Lives take an in-depth look at the project's final evaluation report.

Watch here.

Looked after children stress test 2020

This document uses publicly available data to examine recent trends in the numbers, rates and spend on looked after children (LAC) in England.

- The first section presents national trends from 2012 to 2019.

- The second section examines trends across local authorities. As part of this, it highlights those local authorities that we think, from the data, may be experiencing the most pressures in catering for LAC. We also highlight local authorities that may be sites of effective practice.

The full document is available here.

Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

Local Government Association. Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

This report presents the findings of the first national thematic analysis of published and unpublished safeguarding adult reviews (SARs) in England since implementation of section 44, Care Act 2014. Hitherto, in place of a national overview, messages from SARs for sector-led improvement have been derived from regional analyses and from research studies that have focused on specific types of abuse and neglect.

The analysis was commissioned so that the findings can inform sector led improvement in safeguarding adults in England, and the priorities of the adult safeguarding element of the Care and Health Improvement Programme. Throughout the report, priorities for sector-led improvement are proposed. They are also collated in the final section of the report.

Local Government Association. Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during COVID 19.
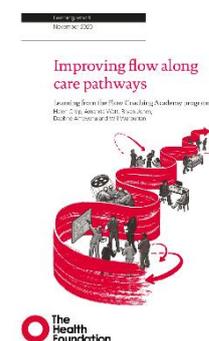
Local Partnerships were commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) to investigate lessons learnt from the Everyone In response to the COVID-19 crisis in dealing with rough sleeping and those at risk of it and how this can inform future policy and practice, including planning for winter.

The main conclusion was that the success of Everyone In demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping.

The Health Foundation. Improving flow along care pathways.

This learning report is based on the formative Flow Coaching Academy (FCA) evaluation completed in 2019 by RAND Europe and interviews with FCA programme leads during the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on how the programme has been planned, designed and implemented. The report also explores flow coaching academies in more detail, how coaches are selected and trained and how care pathways are chosen. In the 5 years from 2015 to 2020, the FCA programme has evolved from an emergent initiative into an evidence-based, replicable approach to improvement at scale and has been adopted at a strategic level by NHS organisations. The growing FCA community are committed to continuing to co-design the programme, sharing experience and co-innovating as the programme adapts to the changing context of health care.

The learning in this report will be of value to the national and regional organisations, system leaders and improvement practitioners involved in commissioning, planning and delivering improvement programmes in the NHS.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Continuing Healthcare: Getting it right first time.

This report draws on 60 complaints about NHS Continuing Healthcare resolved by the Parliamentary and Healthcare Ombudsman in the last three years.

The Ombudsman found significant failings in care and support planning as well as failings in reviews of previously unassessed periods of care. These mistakes mean people have unnecessarily paid out large sums to cover care or gone without care because of incorrect or delayed decisions. Many have faced years of uncertainty about their future finances and experienced stress, anxiety and ill-health as a result.

Key recommendations are:

- Locally support the skills and experiences of NHS CHC practitioners

- Sharing learning nationally

- Putting learning into practice

- Supporting people and provider through the NHS CHC process

- Developing national guidance

- Delivering capability in the NHS CHC system

Briefings

The Health Foundation. The impact of Extensive Care Service and Enhanced Primary Care in Fylde Coast.

In this briefing, the Improvement Analytics Unit – a partnership between the Health Foundation and NHS England and NHS Improvement – has found evidence that multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) may increase emergency hospital activity at least in the short term.

The IAU has evaluated two integrated team initiatives developed in the Fylde Coast NHS vanguard: the Extensive Care Service (ECS) and Enhanced Primary Care (EPC). Both use risk stratification to help identify adults with complex chronic care needs who are at risk of hospitalisation.

Key points:

- The analysis has found that ECS and EPC patients were admitted to hospital in an emergency respectively 27% and 42% more often compared with their matched control group. Similar trends have been also found across other measures of hospitalisation.

- Due to observable differences remaining between these groups, the study could not conclude that this was a direct causal effect of the new initiatives.

- Their analysis suggests that at least in the short-term emergency hospital use may increase. As more multidisciplinary teams are established across England, further research is needed to understand why they are not having the anticipated effect on emergency hospital use.

National Health Service. Action from learning: deaths of people with a learning disability from COVID-19.

This report outlines the work the NHS is doing to make sure that people with a learning disability who get coronavirus receive better treatment and care.

Making Every Adult Matter. The sentencing white paper: impacts on people facing multiple disadvantage.

This policy into practice briefing reviews the proposals outlined in the Ministry of Justice's A Smarter Approach to Sentencing. The paper set out the government's plans for significant changes to sentencing and policy in England and Wales. This briefing asks what the impacts might be for people facing multiple disadvantage.

Tools and Guidance

Community Care. Secondary trauma guide.

The guide is written by Lori Goossen, who has been a social worker for more than 25 years and has practised social work in Canada, the US and the UK. She is currently the principal child and families social worker for Medway Council and has been delivering workshops on secondary trauma for more than eight years.

The guide includes:

- The key differences between secondary trauma and stress and burnout.

- The effect that secondary trauma has on you as a person and a professional, on your organisation and on service users.

- Tips on how you can reduce its impact.

Children and young people's services

Reports

Children's Commissioner. Children's experiences in mental health wards.

As part of the Children's Commissioner's research into the experiences of children admitted to inpatient mental health wards, they carried out visits to four different Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) inpatient wards, including: two general CAMHS wards, one Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) and one Specialist Eating Disorder Unit. The primary focus of the work was exploring how children's experiences differed for those admitted to a mental health hospital 'informally' (that is where they or their parents consented to the admission) compared to those detained under the Mental Health Act. They spoke to all children more widely about how they felt about being in hospital, and the things that made their stay there easier or harder to manage.

Children's Commissioner. Mean Streets.

This report explores when, where and why children feel unsafe, and what could be done to address these fears. This report is based on the findings from seven focus groups conducted with children aged 7 to 18 in Sheffield, chosen because it has average levels of crime, poverty and educational provision for England.

Children's Commissioner. Who are they? Where are they? 2020.

This report updates the figures from the 2019 report which set out to explore how many children in England are 'locked up' and addresses some of the gaps in data identified last year.
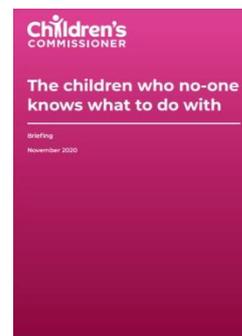
Key points:

- For March 2020, the Children's Commissioner identified a total of 1,340 children in the official figures. Of these 715 children were living in Secure Children's Homes, Secure Training Centres and Young Offenders Institutions because they had either been sentenced or remanded there by a court. This is down from 873 children identified in their previous report. There are now 81 children living in Secure Children's Homes for welfare reasons, slightly down from 87 last year.

- The Children's Commissioner found that there are 237 children detained under the Mental Health Act on secure mental health wards and psychiatric intensive care units, and a further 307 detained on non-secure wards, making a total of 544 children. This suggests a slight rise from the 505 children included in last year's report, but because of the poor quality of NHS data it is impossible to make a direct comparison across the years.

- The report also explores what is known about groups of 'invisible children' who do not appear in statistics about children deprived of liberty. This year they carried out visits to mental health wards to interview children who had been admitted 'informally', that

is on the basis of either their or their parents' consent, rather than being sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

- An update is also provided on the numbers of children who have been deprived of their liberty through the 'inherent jurisdiction' of the high court. This is used when no existing piece of legislation allows for a child to be deprived of liberty, but it is judged necessary to keep them safe. As their review of court cases shows, it is often used when a child needs a place in a secure children's home but there is none available. The numbers of children in this position appear to be rising, with 327 children included on applications to the high court in 2019/20 compared to 215 last year and 103 the year before.

- The Children's Commissioner also conducted a series of visits to residential special schools and children's homes to learn more about children who are living in these settings with extensive restrictions on their freedom. As this report shows, even when they are getting appropriate care and support, these children often do not have the right legal protections in place.

Children's Commissioner. The children who no-one knows what to do with.

This paper summarises the findings of three years of work by the Children's Commissioner's Office and provides context for two further reports the Commissioner is publishing today ('Private provision in children's social care' and 'Stability index 2020'). The report explains the failure of local and national government to take responsibility for these children, and sets out what action is needed by government – both local and national – to fix this broken system.

The Children's Society. Support for families with NRPF during pandemic.

This briefing outlines what No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is; how many people live in the UK with NRPF; the impact it has on children; the support available to children in families with NRPF; explores whether NRPF is fit for purpose; and raises Parliamentary questions.

Summary:

- Thousands of children are facing extreme poverty during the second lockdown in England because strict immigration rules prevent their families from accessing the welfare safety net –even if they cannot work during the COVID-19 crisis. This lack of financial support has serious public health implications.

- Despite numerous calls from campaigners and politicians to suspend No Recourse of Public Funds (NRPF) during the pandemic, the Home Office have continued to apply the NRPF condition to the majority of applications for further leave to remain, pushing more families into deep long-term poverty and destitution during the pandemic.

- Throughout the pandemic, the Government have sought to re-emphasise their com-mitment to the NRPF policy and point to available measures as the reason why no further support is needed. In practice these measures offer little to no help for many

families struggling right now. It is vital that all families, regardless of the parents' immigration status, are able to access the emergency measures put in place (including the Test & Trace Support Payment Scheme) and that waiting times for change of conditions applications to access public funds are reduced to 24 hours.

Local Government Association. Children missing education.

This research was commissioned by the Local Government Association in December 2019 in response to a growing concern that more and more children were missing out on their entitlement to a formal full-time education. The purpose of this research is to look at the issue of children missing education in its entirety. Drawing on evidence provided by local authorities, school leaders and parents they try to understand who the children are who are missing out on a formal full time education, how many children fit this description, what evidence there is for the long-term impact of children missing education and how local and national government might work together to address this issue.

Department for Education. Children's Social Care Innovation Programme Round 2 Final Report.

This report provides an overview of key findings from evaluations of the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme (Innovation Programme hereafter), as well as drawing some overall conclusions and suggesting recommendations for children's services based on the body of evidence as a whole.

The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme launched in 2014 to test and share effective ways of supporting vulnerable children and young people who need help from children's social care services. Round 2 took place between 2016 and 2020. This report provides an overview of findings from evaluations, overall conclusions and suggests recommendations for children's services.

Department for Education. School and college staff wellbeing report.

This literature review was commissioned to support the work of the expert advisory group, following the launch of the Department for Education's Teacher Recruitment and Retention strategy to advise on wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges.

The main aim of this review is to establish the effectiveness of the existing support available to enable and promote staff wellbeing in schools and further education (FE) colleges in England.

Department of Education. Talented leaders programme evaluation.

This evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the talented leaders programme. The overarching aim of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Talented Leaders programme in terms of enabling sustainable improvement in schools in challenging circumstances. Specifically, the evaluation looked to assess how effectively the programme was delivered; the extent to which the programme achieved its objectives including recruitment targets; and the programme's impact on school performance, staff, pupils and Talented Leaders.

Early Intervention Foundation. Planning early childhood services in 2020: Learning from practice and research on children's centres and family hubs.

This report sets out to understand contemporary local practice relating to children's centres and family hubs, and to explore how far this current practice, alongside existing research and evidence, can guide the future development of these important aspects of early childhood services.

It is based on practice learning from qualitative interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in 14 local areas across England, and a rapid review of the evidence relating to how children's centres and hubs are designed and delivered.

The report explores four main questions relating to how children's centres and family hubs are designed and delivered:

- What are children's centres and hubs for?

- Who are children's centres and hubs for?

- What are the most effective ways of delivering children's centres and hubs?

- How important are evidence-based interventions to children's centres and hubs?

Ofsted. Matching in foster care: making good decisions for children and care leavers.

This report sets out findings from a small research project that explored what contributes to good matching decisions for children in foster care. This project is the first part of a wider research programme that looks at decision-making for children in care, or on the edge of care, and care leavers. The research activity took place in the summer of 2019 before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Ofsted is aware of the serious and varied challenges that the pandemic presents to practitioners and carers, however, they remain confident that their findings remain relevant.

Local Government Association. Planning, commissioning, funding and supporting post-16 high needs students.

In January 2020, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Natspec commissioned acl consulting to undertake a review of arrangements for planning, commissioning, funding, and supporting provision for post-16 high needs students.

The purpose of the review was to provide the study's sponsors with a clearer understanding of how local authorities and providers within the post-16 high needs system – general further education colleges and special post-16 institutions – can work together to manage an increased demand for support for high needs students, and what more can be done to make best use of resources.
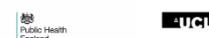
Briefings

Children's Commissioner. Private provision in children's social care.

This report reviews the market for provision in children's social care and focuses on private provision, given its growth and consolidation in recent years. It explores the profits made by private companies and what their involvement means for children. It also raises questions about the way some large private providers are financed, potentially creating risks and instability for the functioning of the market – and ultimately for the children in their care.

Public Health England. Learning from local authorities with downward trends in childhood obesity.

The main aim of this research was to investigate local authorities (LAs) in England who were identified to have significant downward trends in childhood obesity from 2006/07 to 2015/16, in order to identify common approaches or interventions that may have contributed to reductions in childhood obesity. Further aims were to highlight where future research would be beneficial to increase the evidence base for tackling childhood obesity and to inform and support LAs in their quest to reduce childhood obesity.

Although this research took place in 2017 it shows that LAs with small but significant downward 10-year trends in BMI z-score in children were using a highly diverse set of Learning from local authorities with downward trends in childhood obesity approaches and initiatives to tackle childhood and all-age obesity. The most common approaches, reported by around three-quarters of LAs studied included 1) linkage across child and family weight management, the NCMP and schools; strong integration of the NCMP with elements of obesity prevention; 2) a focus on schools using in some instances 'whole school' approaches and 3) a strong focus on early years nutrition and exercise. Other common approaches reported by two-thirds of LAs included: 1) having an LA childhood obesity strategy and childhood obesity as a priority within the LA; 2) a focus on physical activity and 3) an openness to broader partnerships with other LAs and the third sector. Using a 'whole systems' approach was reported by just under half the LAs (48%).

The commonality of these approaches across LAs suggests that these may be important in preventing childhood obesity, however Public Health England noted that the methods used do not allow the researchers to attribute causality. It is hoped that these findings serve to generate hypotheses about the approaches and interventions being used in LAs that are more successful in shifting the BMI distribution of their child populations and reducing childhood obesity, and therefore serve as the basis for future research.

Shelter. The impact of homelessness and bad housing on children's education.

A major new study from Shelter and YouGov reveals the lasting impact of homelessness and bad housing on a child's education. With 136,000 children growing up in temporary accommodation across Britain, it is unsurprising that more than half (56%) of state schoolteachers in Britain have worked at a school with homeless children in the last three years and have witnessed some of the most devastating effects homelessness and bad housing can have on a child's wellbeing and their ability to learn.

To lift children and their families out of bad housing and homelessness, Shelter is calling on the government to:
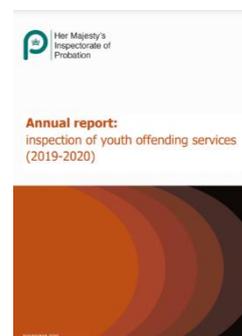
- Strengthen our welfare safety net, by removing the benefit cap and ensuring housing benefit is fit for purpose.

- Bring forward urgent legislation to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions, which remains one of the leading causes of homelessness.

- Tackle the root cause of the housing emergency, by investing in a new generation of social homes.

Criminal Justice

Reports

HM Inspectorate of Probation. Annual report: inspection of youth offending services (2019-2020).

The last 15 months have seen a continuation of the trends in youth justice that have been evident over the last decade. The number of children under 18 entering the youth justice system for the first time, through a conviction or caution, continues to fall and now represents a tiny proportion of the overall population of this age group – well under one percent of all 10 to 17-year-olds in all the areas they have visited.

The numbers entering custody are even smaller and fell dramatically as youth courts closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. By July 2020, there were only 563 children under 18 in custody – 31 per cent fewer than 12 months previously and only a fifth of the number in custody in 2003, when the figure exceeded 3,000. It is, therefore, all the more inexcusable that the support offered to the relatively small number of children leaving custody each year remains so poor – particularly for those in local authority care once they come out. This joint inspection of the quality of support offered to children leaving custody last year showed that this had not improved in the five years since HM Inspectorate of Probation last inspected this issue. This is not good enough. So, from the spring of 2021, the Inspectorate will be introducing a specific new standard into our local inspections on the quality of resettlement work from custody. This will apply to every YOT that has had a child in custody over the year before inspection.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown did bring some temporary relief in terms of local crime rates. Anecdotally, and supported by local data in areas like London, there was a sharp drop in crime rates between April and June, but they have been on the rise again as these restrictions are changed or eased. There are signs in some of the YOTs inspected over the last year that teenage knife crime may be coming back under control, but the most recent national knife crime statistics show that knife crime continues to increase year on year. County lines drug supply activity and sexual and criminal exploitation of young people by older adults also remain real concerns, and have continued during the pandemic as organised criminals adapted their markets and delivery methods to a Covid-19 world.

Ministry of Justice. HM Prison and Probation Service offender equalities annual report 2019 to 2020.

This report focuses on the six protected characteristics where data are collected and are of sufficient quality for statistics to be meaningful. In general, this report is limited to analysis on sex, age, race (ethnicity) and religious belief for these reasons. Where data are available for other protected characteristics at sufficient quality and with sufficient coverage to be meaningful, they are also presented and considered.

The report presents some analysis by individual characteristic and is meant to serve as a guide for further research. In many cases, more than one factor (e.g. age and another protected characteristic, criminal history, socio-economic) may have an effect on an outcome.

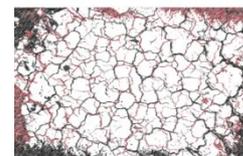## Ministry of Justice. Women and the Criminal Justice System 2019.

This publication compiles statistics from data sources across the Criminal Justice System (CJS), to provide a combined perspective on the typical experiences of females who come into contact with it. It considers how these experiences have changed over time and how they contrast to the typical experiences of males. No causative links can be drawn from these summary statistics, differences observed may indicate areas worth further investigation, but should not be taken as evidence of unequal treatments or as direct effects of sex.

In general, females appear to be substantially underrepresented throughout the CJS compared with males. This is particularly true in relation to the most serious offence types and sentences, though patterns by sex vary between individual offences.

Prison Reform Trust. Who Cares? Exploring distress in prison from the perspective of people in prison.

By exploring distress in prison from the perspective of those who live there, and drawing from a range of other sources including television documentaries and podcasts, newspaper articles, academic and grey literature, this report focuses on how aspects of the prison environment can interact with well-known self-harm and suicide risk factors to either reduce or increase risk further.

This report focuses on how aspects of the prison environment can interact with well-known self-harm and suicide risk factors to either reduce or increase risk further. The Prison Reform Trust sought to explore distress in prison from the perspective of the prisoner without any set questions or agenda. They explored secondary data published within the last five years, looking at what prisoners (and ex-prisoners) had said about distress in prison using television documentaries and podcasts, mainstream and prison specific newspaper articles, academic and grey literature containing prisoner quotes, as well as twitter and lived-experience blogs.

The key themes centred around the physical environment of prison (including separation from society as well as factors such as noise and lack of hygiene), the emptiness of prison (including issues such as boredom, loneliness and monotony), the big events (such as violence, re-categorisation and release), mental ill-health (which might be pre-existing and pervasive) and substance use, shifting sense of self (and how this can impact on self-worth), staff reaction to distress and any potential protective factors. These themes interact and will be experienced differently by each prisoner. They conclude that it would benefit those working in the prison system to have training on the impact of the culture on prisoners if there is to be a reduction in distress, self-harm and self-inflicted death.

Tools and Guidance

HM Prison and Probation Service. Integrated Offender Management Action Plan.

This action plan is a response to the thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate Probation and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, explaining which recommendations have been agreed and the response taken/planned.

Women's Aid. Research Integrity Framework on Domestic Violence and Abuse.

This framework brings together the knowledge and experience of both academic and NGO partners, drawing on feminist research practice since the 1970s. Going back 50 years, the four federations emerged from the women's liberation movement and were largely survivor-led. Each federation has engaged, over recent decades, in context- specific research to transform policy, services, and the lives of women and children across the United Kingdom.

This framework recognises that those engaged in collaborative research and evaluation have a responsibility to nurture sound, ethical research and to discourage research practice that is unethical or misrepresents itself and/or victims-survivors' experiences.

The framework sets out the critical importance of grounding research on domestic abuse within the wider field of violence against women and girls, taking an intersectional approach and ensuring that research focusing on minoritised groups should be carried out by researchers from organisations led by those groups. The four Women's Aid federations want researchers, organisations, journals, national and local policymakers, and commissioners to sign up to the five pillars set out in this framework.

- Safety and wellbeing

- Transparency/accountability

- Equality, human rights, and social justice

- Engagement

- Research ethics