



CordisPulse

May 2019

Welcome to May'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.

This month we were interested to see the evaluation undertaken for Public Health Wales in relation to the routine enquiry into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The report presents some useful statistics about the profile of ACEs across the pilot areas. Combined with our research for a local authority in Wales it demonstrates how increasing number of ACEs can correlate with increasing need (see our blog post [here](#)).

Our research suggests that this relationship is relatively weak, and there are exceptions: there are families with high numbers of ACEs but low current disadvantage, and families with high current disadvantage but low numbers of ACEs. We think more research is needed here. In particular, we need to understand how individuals experiencing risks as children can build resilience so that their children are less likely to experience poor outcomes.

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.

Cordis Bright Ltd, 23/24 Smithfield Street, London, EC1A 9LF.

Telephone: 020 7330 9170

E: info@cordisbright.co.uk  [@CordisBright](https://twitter.com/CordisBright)

W: www.cordisbright.co.uk  [Cordis Bright](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cordis-bright)



Cordis Bright News

UK Evaluation Society Conference

Cordis Bright are members of the UK Evaluation Society (UKES) which is a member's organisation set up to support evaluators by promoting and improving the theory, practice, understanding and utilisation of evaluation. We were pleased to attend the recent UKES annual conference where we participated in sessions on:

- Evaluating complex systems
- Findings from the evaluation of the NHSE new care model vanguards
- Approaches to feasibility studies
- Innovative approaches to data visualisation

Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

The Kings Fund. Social care 360

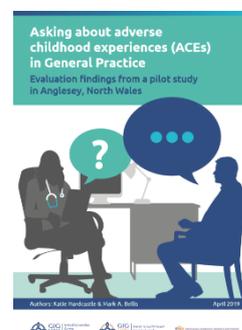
This report from the King's Fund, argues that the common view that there is a lack of data about social care is not true and rather it is the fragmented databases that present the problem. The report therefore presents a '360 degree' of the sector through exploration of social care data in six key areas: access, expenditure, providers, workforce and carers, quality and integration with other services.

A number of key emerging themes were reported. This included evidence on the growth in support required by working-age adults. For instance, the family resources survey showed a consistent rise in the last decade in the number of working-age adults identifying themselves as having a disability. There is also evidence to suggest that there is underinvestment in preventative services.

Another emerging theme relates to the tendency for indicators that relate to local authority spending to remain the same or decline while those driven by central government are more likely to increase. The main example given was related to the number of carers supported by local government which has fallen over the past four years while the numbers receiving Carer's Allowance (a national benefit) has nearly doubled.

Public Health Wales. Asking about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in General Practice

ACE's such as child abuse and neglect or growing up with caregivers who abuse alcohol or drugs, are strongly associated with poor health outcomes later in life. Therefore, this report details key findings from the evaluation of a local pilot initiative delivering an 'ACE enquiry' with adult general practice patients across three different sites in Wales. The pilot took place between November 2017 and April 2018, involving 565 patients.



An ACE inquiry refers to an intervention whereby patients with ACE's are identified by reception staff and are then given the opportunity to discuss their ACE's in their GP appointments and be provided with further support. The key aims of the evaluation were therefore to consider the feasibility and acceptability of ACE enquiry in general practice from a patient and practitioner perspective and to explore the relationship between ACEs and health outcomes for this cohort, offering insights into how this data could be utilised to assess the impact of ACE enquiry on future service utilisation.

Overall, the report finds considerable support for the acceptability of ACE enquiry in general practice by patients and practitioners, both of whom understand its relevance and added value in supporting individuals' health and wellbeing.

British Medical Journal. Reforming disease definitions: a new primary care led, people-centred approach

The authors of this report argue that expanding disease definitions are causing increasing numbers of previously healthy people to be labelled as 'diseased' which contributes to the problem of over diagnosis and related overtreatment. Over diagnosis and overtreatment are viewed as potentially problematic because it increases the risk of people being treated unnecessarily and producing harm and waste which poses a major threat to human health and the sustainability of health systems.

An example of overdiagnosis provided in the report is the widely used definition for 'chronic kidney disease' which labels around half of all older people, yet many of them will never experience related symptoms. Furthermore, the guidelines which launched the broad new condition called 'chronic kidney disease' was sponsored by Amgen, and despite sustained criticism about the potential for overdiagnosis, the broadened definition has been defended and reaffirmed by individuals and groups with ties to pharmaceutical companies.

The report concludes that disease definitions should be decided through new processes made up on new multi-disciplinary panels which are free from financial conflicts of interest.

Briefings

The Kings Fund. What does the NHS England review of waiting times mean for accident and emergency departments?

The Kings Fund supports the proposals by NHS England to review whether the NHS targets are still fit for purpose is. This includes the current standard for 95% of all patients attending an A&E department to spend no more than four hours before being admitted to hospital, discharged or transferred. Clinical care and patterns of demand for services have evolved since targets on A&E performance were introduced and therefore this target may no longer be appropriate.

They argue that NHS England should exercise caution as making changes to targets will not be straightforward and the implications for patients at the moment is unclear. Furthermore, the six-month piloting period for target changes is relatively short and given the context of unsustainably high hospital bed occupancy and pressures on social care services, changing waiting time targets will not be enough to alter the fundamentals of how patients and the public experience NHS emergency care.

Tools and Guidance

HM Government. 2019-20 Better Care Fund: Policy Framework



The Better Care Fund (BCF) was set up to bring about the Government's aims around integrating health, social care and housing to promote person-centred integrated care. The Policy framework argues that progress has been made with 93% of local areas agreeing that the BCF has improved joint working between health and social care in their local area and 91% agreed that BCF plans had a positive impact on the integration of health and social care. Furthermore, since the inception of the BCF, local areas have voluntarily pooled at least £1.5 billion above the minimum required in each year with approximately £2.1 billion planned in voluntary pooled funding in 2018-19.

This policy framework sets out plans for the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2019- 20 which will retain the same National Conditions as in 2017-19. The total BCF contributions (from CCGs, Disabled Facilities Grant, Grant allocation for adult social care and winter pressures grant funding) will be £6.422 billion combined.

Children and young people's services

Reports

Education Policy Institute. **Unexplained pupil exits from schools: A growing problem?**

Over the past decade, a considerable number of pupils have left schools in England to move to a different school or leave the state school system completely, for entirely unknown reasons. Therefore, this working paper investigates 'unexplained' exits from school by analysing secondary school records of three cohorts of pupils taking their GCSEs at three different points in time (2011, 2014 and 2017).



The study found that pupils who were considered to be from vulnerable learner groups were more likely to leave school for unknown reasons (i.e. not due to changes in care placements or address). This means that pupils who are in contact with the social care system, those eligible for free school meals, from black ethnic minority backgrounds, achieved low attainment at primary school, experienced permanent or fixed period exclusion and experienced a high number of authorised school absences were more likely to exit school for an unexplained reason.

Early Intervention Foundation. **Engaging disadvantaged and vulnerable parents: An evidence review**

This review was conducted as part of the policy drive by the Department for Work and Pensions to better understand how to tackle parental conflict. The review investigates the evidence on to how engage disadvantaged and vulnerable parents in parenting and conflict programmes with the aim of providing some practical policy recommendations. The review highlights that when trying to engage disadvantage and vulnerable parents, it is important to develop interventions which closely match the needs, concerns and lifestyles of the target audience.

The Children's Society. **Transitions to adulthood: The case for a cross-departmental taskforce**

This report contains a collection of essays from organisations who work with 16 and 17 year olds who advocate that many vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds need more support as they move into adulthood. They argue that vulnerable individuals within this age group face multiple disadvantages from mental ill health to poverty or homelessness and yet they face barriers to accessing support. This is because they are no longer a priority to universal services such as education, specialist services such as child protection and more complex systems such as the youth justice or immigration systems. The authors argue that to improve transitions for vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds then a co-ordinated response is required. Therefore, it is recommended that a Government cross-departmental taskforce look into transition planning for older teenagers.

Public Health England. Child sexual exploitation: How public health can support prevention and intervention



The purpose of this report is to present a public health framework for addressing child sexual exploitation which has been structured around existing evidence and research conducted by the International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire.

Child sexual exploitation
How public health can support prevention
and intervention

The framework comprises three key functions for public health: to lead the public health response to child sexual exploitation, to improve understanding of local contexts and risks and wellbeing through public health programmes and in schools, as well as using data and intelligence to inform local strategies and plans.

Briefings

The Sutton Trust. School Funding and Pupil Premium 2019

This report is the latest instalment of the Sutton Trust's annual polling of teachers which looks at issues around funding, budget pressures, use of Pupil Premium funding and the application of evidence in schools. 1,678 teachers were surveyed as part of this project.

The research found that budget pressures are increasingly problematic with 69% of secondary senior leaders having to make cuts to teaching staff for financial reasons and 72% of primary school heads reporting that they had to cut teaching assistants. Teachers also report that budget pressures have led to cuts in resources such as IT equipment (61% of teachers), school outings (41% of teachers), sport (28%) and cuts in subject choices at GCSE (47% of teachers).

It was also found that pupil premium funding is being used to plug gaps in budgets with 27% of secondary school leaders reporting this. This is worrying as 55% of school leaders feel that pupil premium funding is helping to close attainment gaps.

The Children's Society. Loneliness in childhood

The Children's Society have produced a briefing exploring the links between loneliness and well-being among 10-17 year olds as part of their work with the Office for National Statistics to establish a set of questions to measure loneliness among children and young people.

They report that there is strong evidence that there is a link between loneliness and wellbeing, finding that 25% of children in their sample with low well-being also responded that they felt lonely 'often'. Their analysis also found that loneliness is not just an issue which affects children in the poorest households with the proportion of children from the highest income households who 'often' feel lonely being 6% higher than for the lowest income group.



In the briefing it is argued that in order to tackle loneliness, it cannot be tackled in isolation and issues such as over-stretched mental health services, serious youth violence and rising rates of child poverty must also be tackled. They, therefore, advocate for a government cross-departmental children's well-being strategy.

Criminal Justice

Reports

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. UK Justice Policy Review: Volume 8

Since 2010, the Centre for Crime and Justice studies (supported by The Hadley Trust) has been assessing criminal justice developments across the UK and this is the 8th instalment, covering the period from the 8th June 2017 to 24th July 2018.

The report covers developments across the UK including: key speeches, main legislation by the UK parliament and Scottish parliament, policing, courts and access to justice, prisons and probation.

This instalment argues that there is a crisis in the criminal justice system. Some examples included planning for Brexit, problems with evidence disclosures in the courts, faltering progress on the Scottish women's prison population, legal aid reform and tougher sentencing.



House of Commons Justice Committee. Prison population 2022: planning for the future

Over the past 25 years, the prison population has grown from 44,246 in 1993 to 82,384 as at December 2018. This significant growth has meant that capacity has not kept pace with demand and so many prisons are now deemed overcrowded. In this paper, it is argued that spending money on building extra prisons is not the right answer and instead there should be a focus on investing services to reduce the £15 billion annual cost of reoffending and prevent offenders from continually returning to prison which would thus reduce the size of the prison population.

Clinks. Whole prison, whole person: How a holistic approach can support good mental health in prison

This report sets out the key principles and recommendations towards developing a whole prison approach to good mental health for people in contact with the criminal justice system, especially those with protected characteristics.

They report that in general the restriction of liberty, separation from support networks and denial of agency (key parts of a custodial sentence) will inevitably impact on an individual's mental health. Furthermore, the current prison system is struggling under a rising prison population and ageing infrastructure, and so the current context of overcrowding, increased levels of violence and widespread drug use have major impacts on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Therefore, they argue that any whole prison approach must respond to the needs of every person within the prison population, including people from groups with protected characteristics (i.e. those protected under the Equality Act 2010).





Continuity of care throughout an individual's sentence should also be ensured and a culture of wellbeing should be embedded as core business of all those working in the custodial estate. This report particularly emphasises the role of voluntary sector in supporting a whole prison approach to mental health care.

Briefings

Clinks. Response to the HM Inspectorate of Probation's consultation on the inspection of probation providers

In this briefing, Clinks have responded to the HM Inspectorate of Probation's consultation on the inspection of probation providers. They argue for two key overarching priorities which they recommend should be embedded into the inspection standards for probation providers.

The first of these are that the inspectorate should include in its standards a clear focus on the role of the voluntary sector organisations which should be underpinned by key principles for probation to support and communicate with relevant voluntary sector organisations who work with people under probation supervision.

The second is that HMI probation need to look at how to better meet the needs of people protected under the Equalities Act (2010) as there currently unequal outcomes for this group of people. This particularly refers to black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals, women and young adults.