



CordisPulse

January 2026

Welcome to January'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.

December saw the publication of several major government strategies with significant implications across homelessness, violence prevention and youth policy, including: [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), [Freedom from Violence and Abuse](#) and [Youth Matters](#). These strategies signal a renewed focus on prevention, systems change and cross sector collaboration.

A National Plan to End Homelessness explicitly reflects a more preventative, systems-wide approach to tackling homelessness – an area where Cordis Bright has been working closely with MHCLG, the Centre for Homelessness Impact and partners in statutory and voluntary and community sector services across the country. Our evaluation reports on the [systems-wide evaluation of homelessness and rough sleeping](#) and the [Changing Futures programme](#) are cited within the homelessness strategy and helped inform its development. The [preliminary findings report](#) for the systems-wide evaluation was also named by [Inside Housing](#) as one of the best housing research publications of 2025.

If your organisation is responding to these policy developments and would value robust research, evaluation or consultancy support on homelessness or multiple disadvantage, please contact our Director, Hannah Nickson on hannahnickson@cordisbright.co.uk.

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



Director & 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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Cordis Bright News

Contributing to national homelessness prevention: A system-wide approach.

Towards the end of last year, the government published its [National Plan to End Homelessness](#), indicating a promising shift towards focusing on homelessness prevention, seeking to tackle its root causes by building more homes, addressing poverty and putting prevention at the heart of services, as well as ensuring that any homelessness that does occur is rare, brief and non-recurring.

The plan is informed in part by our [systems-wide evaluation of the homelessness and rough sleeping system](#), which seeks to identify opportunities for ambitious change by answering how the different levers and interventions made by government contribute to homelessness and rough sleeping outcomes; how the different parts of the system work - or don't work - together; and how the system might be optimised to improve outcomes and value for money.

A range of outputs from the evaluation have recently been published, including [a report from a deep dive into the relationship between the criminal justice system and homelessness](#). This explores pathways from prison into accommodation or homelessness, highlights structural barriers and service gaps, and examines how individual circumstances and demographics shape outcomes. It identifies what is working well and less well and provides policy insights to improve support for people leaving prison.

We look forward to continuing to work with MHCLG and the Centre for Homelessness Impact on the evaluation this year, furthering the evidence base and supporting effective action to prevent homelessness.

Changing Futures programme: final evaluation report and supporting outputs.

We are delighted to share our final evaluation report and supporting outputs on the Changing Futures programme, in partnership with [CFE Research](#), [Revolving Doors](#) and [The School of Health and Related Research](#) at the University of Sheffield.

The Changing Futures programme is a 5-year £91.8 million initiative between [MHCLG](#) and [The National Lottery Community Fund](#). It seeks to test innovative approaches to improving outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage – including combinations of homelessness, drug and/or alcohol problems, mental ill health, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system. The programme is running in 15 areas, between them covering 34 top-tier council areas, across England from 2021 to 2026.

The evaluation found:

- For individuals - the Changing Futures programme has contributed to improved quality of life for participants through the caseworker teams and associated services funded by the programme. The combination of practical and emotional support and improved access to and engagement with external services all contribute to early outcomes such as improved housing and stabilisation or reduction in substance use.
- For services - the programme has contributed to change through workforce development activities and multidisciplinary teams that have helped to engage and influence other services. However, evidence of change mainly relates to Changing Futures teams or organisations working closely with the programme.



- For wider system - the Changing Futures programme has made progress towards increasing strategic alignment and creating more joined-up commissioning. However, stakeholders from most partnerships indicated that the pace of change at the strategic level was slower than hoped for.



Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. A National Plan to End Homelessness.

The UK Government has published A National Plan to End Homelessness, a cross-government strategy setting out long-term action to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. It outlines a vision in which homelessness becomes rare, brief and not repeated, and emphasises prevention, early intervention and collaboration across departments and public services.

The plan includes national targets to halve the number of people sleeping rough long-term, eliminate the unlawful use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for families (except in emergencies), and increase prevention support for households at risk. Plans also cover building more homes, boosting investment in homelessness and rough sleeping services, and introducing a duty to collaborate requiring public bodies to work together to stop people from leaving institutions such as hospitals or prisons into homelessness. The strategy draws on the voices of people with lived experience and embeds accountability mechanisms to track progress toward ending homelessness in England.

Publications accompanying A National Plan to End Homelessness

Alongside A National Plan to End Homelessness, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published a series of evaluations and evidence reports to strengthen understanding of homelessness and rough sleeping and inform delivery of the national strategy.

Evaluations

- [Systems-wide evaluation of homelessness and rough sleeping](#)
An ongoing evaluation examining how different parts of the homelessness system interact, including housing, health, justice and migration. Early findings highlight system complexity, coordination gaps and the need for stronger cross-sector alignment to improve outcomes.
- [Rough Sleeping Initiative: process evaluation](#)
Assesses how local authorities and partners implemented the Rough Sleeping Initiative. It highlights effective outreach, emergency accommodation and partnership working, alongside challenges such as workforce capacity, data sharing and service integration.
- [Rough Sleeping and Complex Needs: process evaluation](#)
Explores delivery of tailored, person-centred support for people experiencing rough sleeping alongside multiple and interconnected needs. The evaluation finds that trauma-informed, multi-agency approaches improve engagement and stability, but notes barriers linked to workforce shortages and access to services.

Evidence reviews



- [Tenancy sustainment and complex needs](#)
Reviews existing research on what helps people with complex needs maintain stable housing. It identifies the importance of early intervention, flexible and ongoing support, and strong coordination between housing, health and social care services.

Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD)

- [Local authority homelessness and rough sleeping data linking](#)
Sets out how linking local homelessness data with national datasets can improve understanding of people's pathways into and through homelessness. Early findings show how linked data can support more targeted prevention and service planning.
- [Links between homelessness and offending](#)
Uses linked data to explore the relationship between homelessness and criminal justice involvement. The analysis highlights pathways that increase risks of both homelessness and offending, informing more joined-up prevention approaches.
- [Rough sleeping and substance use treatment](#)
Examines links between rough sleeping and access to drug and alcohol treatment. Findings suggest substance misuse often precedes housing instability, while also highlighting data limitations and areas for further evidence development.

Workforce capacity

- [Local authority homelessness workforce report](#)
Examines the size, roles and pressures facing homelessness and rough sleeping teams. The report highlights staffing shortages, high workloads and reliance on short-term funding, underlining the need for stable investment and workforce development.

Department of Health and Social Care. Black maternal health: government response to the Health and Social Care Committee.

The UK Government has published its formal response to the Health and Social Care Committee's Black Maternal Health report, which examined inequalities in maternity outcomes for Black women in England. The Government agrees with the Committee's core point that addressing stark disparities in maternity care, including outcomes, experiences and systemic inequities, is essential to ensure safe, personalised care for all women. It highlights a range of actions already underway to tackle maternal health inequalities, such as improving data collection on ethnicity and maternal morbidity and strengthening leadership, culture and workforce practices within the NHS.

However, the response does not accept the Committee's recommendation to reinstate ring-fenced maternity funding, instead favouring local decision-making flexibility. The Government also plans further systemic work to better understand severe failures in maternity care, though it has not committed to mandatory cultural competency training for all maternity staff.

National Data Guardian. Can communications create reasonable expectations about uses of health and care data? Insights from co-design and public testing.

The report commissioned by the Office of the National Data Guardian (NDG) to examine whether clear, co-designed communications can help





the public understand and reasonably expect how their health and care data is used beyond direct care. Drawing on co-design workshops, deliberative sessions, focus groups and a large-scale survey, the study finds that most people support data use for public benefit but often lack awareness of routine secondary uses.

The research shows that well-designed, layered communications can successfully inform people about why data is accessed, who uses it, how it is used and what safeguards are in place, reducing the risk of “surprise”. It highlights the importance of clarity, proportionality and accessibility, and supports the NDG’s emphasis on transparency and the principle of “no surprises” in ethical data governance.

Department of Health and Social Care. Evaluation of the Accelerating Reform Fund.

The evaluation assesses a £42.6 million government programme designed to support innovation and reform in adult social care in England, with a strong focus on improving support for unpaid carers. Delivered through 42 local authority consortia, the fund supported 141 innovation projects aimed at embedding and scaling new approaches to care.

The evaluation finds that the Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF) has helped local systems pilot and develop innovative models, strengthen collaboration across organisations, and begin to address long-standing barriers to social care reform. While around half of projects were in active delivery by the end of the funding period, evidence of measurable outcomes and impacts is still emerging, reflecting the time required to implement and embed innovation. The report highlights the importance of flexible funding, strong governance, co-production with carers, and longer-term investment to support sustainable change and enable successful scaling of effective innovations.

Department of Health and Social Care. Enabling working group reports: 10 Year Health Plan for England.

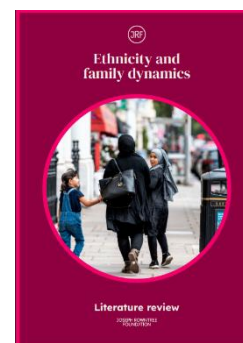
The reports support the development of England’s 10 Year Health Plan, offering detailed analysis on the system changes needed to deliver the long-term vision for the National Health Service (NHS). Seven working groups examined key enablers including finance and contracting, data and technology, physical infrastructure, accountability and oversight, research and innovation, workforce and mobilising change. Their reports emphasise the importance of shifting the NHS toward prevention, community-based care and digital transformation, while addressing systemic barriers such as workforce pressures, financial alignment and fragmented delivery.

The reviews advocate stronger cross-sector collaboration, better use of data and technology, tailored finance frameworks and leadership that supports innovation and local adaptation. Together, these reports set out practical recommendations to enable the ambitious reforms described in the 10 Year Health Plan, helping to build a more sustainable, equitable and resilient health system over the next decade.



Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Ethnicity and Family Dynamics.

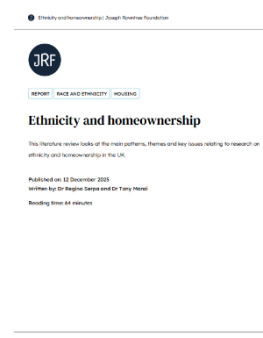
The review explores how ethnicity, racism and family life intersect with people's likelihood of experiencing poverty in the UK. The review draws on evidence from over 250 studies and focuses particularly on Bangladeshi, Black African and Pakistani groups, who research shows are two to three times more likely to experience persistent very deep poverty compared with white households, even after accounting for factors such as family structure and employment patterns. It examines how differences in household composition, labour market participation, housing needs, social networks and migration histories interact with structural influences such as discrimination, local context and policy frameworks to shape poverty outcomes for different ethnic groups.



The review also highlights the roles of intersectionality, intergenerational dynamics and broader systemic barriers in contributing to inequalities and points to areas needing further investigation to inform policy and practice on race and poverty.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Ethnicity and Homeownership.

The review explores how experiences of homeownership vary across ethnic groups in the UK and how structural inequalities influence these outcomes. Drawing on evidence and analysis, the review highlights that homeownership rates are markedly lower among many minoritised ethnic communities, particularly Black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani households, compared with White British households. Factors contributing to these disparities include differences in incomes and wealth, labour market inequalities, discrimination in housing and mortgage markets, and intergenerational disadvantage.



The report also examines how household composition, immigration history and geographic patterns shape access to homeownership. It shows that even when controlling for key socioeconomic variables, significant ethnic gaps remain, indicating the role of broader systemic barriers. The review discusses the implications of these gaps for housing security, wealth accumulation and community stability, and suggests that policy responses need to address both economic and discriminatory barriers to make homeownership more equitable across ethnic groups.

Shelter. Interactive map of homelessness in England.

Shelter has launched an interactive homelessness map that allows users to explore up-to-date homelessness figures across England by local area. The map draws on the charity's analysis of the latest data on people officially recorded as homeless — including those in insecure temporary accommodation, hostels and rough sleeping — and presents comparisons of homelessness rates relative to local populations and changes over time. Shelter's most recent analysis estimates that around 382,618 people in England are homeless, an 8 per cent increase from the previous year, with London and specific boroughs such as Newham showing particularly high rates. The tool is designed to make the scale and geography of the housing emergency more visible and to support local stakeholders, policymakers and the public in understanding the extent of homelessness locally. Shelter

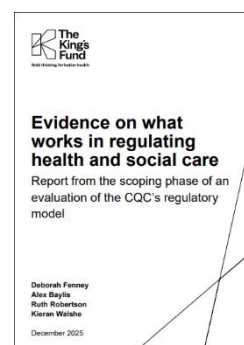
argues that more social housing and reforms to housing support are needed to address the crisis

Shelter. Inequalities in temporary accommodation.

Shelter's analysis highlights growing regional and demographic disparities in the use of temporary housing in England. Drawing on official data, the report shows that households with children, Black and ethnic minority families, and people in London and the South East are disproportionately represented in temporary accommodation, including insecure housing such as bed and breakfasts and private rented placements. Since 2010, the number of households in temporary accommodation has more than tripled, with long stays becoming increasingly common. The analysis underscores how rising housing costs, shortages of social homes and inadequate safety nets in the private rental market contribute to entrenched inequality. Shelter warns that without targeted policy interventions — including increased social housing investment, strengthened housing rights and reforms to homelessness prevention — vulnerable families will continue to face instability and poorer outcomes. The report aims to inform local authorities, policymakers and stakeholders working to address homelessness and housing inequality.

The Kings Fund. Evidence on what works in regulating health and social care.

The report reviews international and national research on effective regulatory practice to inform the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) rebuilding of its regulatory model in England. The report, produced with academic partners during a scoping evaluation phase, highlights key insights on setting clear expectations, developing regulatory expertise, using risk-based approaches, building trustful relationships with providers, and adapting regulatory models to changing contexts.



It underscores the need for regulation that is proportionate, evidence-informed and focused on outcomes, while supporting collaboration rather than adversarial enforcement. The findings aim to help CQC refine its strategy following critical reviews of recent reforms and to ensure that future regulation better promotes quality and safety across health and social care services. The work will contribute to a longer-term evaluation alongside ongoing organisational improvements.

The Kings Fund. How to support partnership working: learning from the Healthy Communities Together programme.

The report offers practical guidance for local systems seeking to strengthen collaboration across health, social care and community partners to improve population outcomes. The guide outlines core principles for effective partnership working, including establishing a shared vision and common goals, building trust and mutual accountability, and designing governance structures that support joint decision-making. It emphasises the importance of inclusive engagement with communities and voluntary sector organisations, aligning incentives and resources, and maintaining transparent, evidence-informed planning and evaluation.



Case examples illustrate how partnerships can navigate local complexity, address power imbalances, and sustain collaborative action through leadership and workforce development.



The document also highlights key enablers such as data sharing agreements, joint outcomes frameworks and regular reflective practice to drive continuous improvement. Its recommendations aim to support systems delivering integrated, equitable and sustainable services.

Briefings

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Next Steps Accommodation Programme evaluation: Briefing paper.

The briefing presents early findings from the UK Government's evaluation of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), which funds local authorities in England to provide tailored housing support for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The briefing highlights how NSAP has enabled councils to offer bespoke accommodation options, intensive support and flexible interventions that aim to prevent homelessness and move people into stable housing more quickly.

Early evidence shows positive improvements in housing security and wellbeing for many participants, with tailored support contributing to increased engagement with health, employment and benefits services. The evaluation also identifies challenges around workforce capacity, service coordination and data collection, and emphasises the importance of strong leadership and partnership working to maximise impact. These insights are intended to inform ongoing delivery and future programme design to improve outcomes for people facing housing instability.

Tools and Guidance

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Ending Rough Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool (ERSRAT).

The Ending Rough Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool has been produced in collaboration with local authorities. It provides a framework for assessing the risk of an individual sleeping rough long term on the basis of their needs and experiences. It equips local authorities and homelessness services with a practical tool to identify risk early, prioritise resources effectively, and deliver targeted interventions that tackle homelessness and rough sleeping and prevent them before they occur.

Department of Health and Social Care, and NHS England. Co-occurring mental health and substance use: delivery framework.

This joint delivery framework between the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England outlines how drug and alcohol services and mental health services should work together more effectively and improve service provision for people with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions. It sets out national commitments across 4 priority areas covering:

- strategic leadership and service design
- data and monitoring
- workforce and training



- commissioning and incentives

The framework explains the actions the government and NHS England will take nationally. It also recommends further actions that commissioners, service providers and others can take to improve care. It aims to ensure people with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions receive integrated, person-centred care rather than being passed between separate services.



Children and Young People's Services

Reports

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. *Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy*.

The UK Government has published a ten-year national plan to improve the lives of young people in England by responding to their priorities and challenges. It was co-produced with over 14,000 young people aged 10–21 (and up to 25 for those with special educational needs/disabilities), and is the first dedicated youth strategy in more than two decades.

The strategy aims to ensure that all young people have skills, opportunities and supportive connections to thrive, and calls for collaborative action across government and with partners. Key ambitions include halving the gap in access to enriching activities between disadvantaged young people and their peers and increasing by half a million the number of young people with access to a trusted adult outside their home.

The strategy sets out ten action areas, from strengthening the youth workforce and improving health and wellbeing, to creating inclusive places to go and enhancing decision-making power for young people themselves. It emphasises local delivery, collaboration and youth-led design, backed by investment in youth services, facilities and support systems.

Publications accompanying the National Youth Strategy

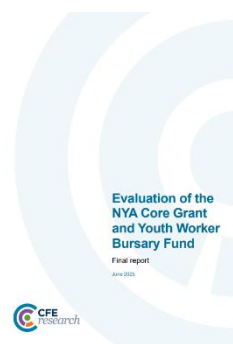
Alongside the publication of *Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy*, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) released a set of research and evidence reports to inform and support delivery of the strategy.

- [**Youth Matters: State of the Nation**](#)
An evidence-based report providing a snapshot of what it is like to grow up in England today. Drawing on the views of more than 14,000 young people, it highlights pressures around mental health, loneliness, access to services and safe spaces, while also capturing young people's aspirations. The findings directly informed the development of the National Youth Strategy.
- [**The Big Ambition Analysis for the National Youth Strategy**](#)
An analysis of free-text responses from The Big Ambition survey, conducted with children and young people in England. It explores young people's priorities across wellbeing, belonging, safety, skills and youth voice, showing strong demand to be listened to, treated fairly and better supported. The analysis emphasises the importance of reflecting children's voices in policy and practice.
- [**National Youth Strategy Research Project**](#)
A summary of Phase 2 research commissioned to build the evidence base for

Youth Matters. Based on a national survey and local engagement activities, it focuses on the solutions young people believe are needed to address challenges such as financial insecurity, wellbeing pressures and shrinking community spaces. The findings highlight the interconnected nature of these issues and the importance of community-centred action.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Evaluation of the NYA Core Grant and Youth Worker Bursary Fund

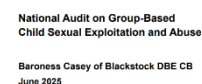
The report examines the impact of Department for Culture, Media and Sport funding on the youth work workforce in England. The evaluation finds that the Core Grant has supported the development of national youth work standards, professional resources, a safeguarding and risk management hub, and sector-wide tools such as the Youth Worker Register and National Youth Sector Census.



The Youth Worker Bursary Fund has enabled around 1,500 practitioners to achieve recognised youth work qualifications since 2020, with a further 1,000 accessing training. Evidence suggests the funding has strengthened workforce skills, improved safeguarding practice, increased confidence among youth workers, and contributed to safer and more effective youth services. The bursary has also supported greater workforce diversity, particularly benefiting practitioners from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds, while highlighting areas for further development in awareness, access and support.

Home Office. National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

The report examines the scale, nature and systemic response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England. The audit finds that while such abuse is relatively rare, it is among the most serious and harmful forms of child sexual abuse, involving multiple perpetrators exploiting vulnerable children through coercion, manipulation and violence. It highlights long-standing failures across policing, safeguarding, health and criminal justice systems, particularly around data quality, information sharing, victim identification and accountability.



The report concludes that there is no reliable national picture of the true scale of group-based exploitation due to inconsistent definitions and poor data collection, including gaps in recording perpetrator characteristics. It also identifies repeated cycles of inquiry and reform without sustained improvement. The audit sets out clear recommendations to strengthen leadership, improve data and intelligence, reform legislation, enhance victim support, and ensure agencies are held accountable for past and future failures.

Cabinet Office. Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty.

The report sets out the UK Government's strategy to reduce child poverty and improve children's life chances across the UK. Developed by the Child Poverty Taskforce, the strategy responds to evidence showing that 4.5 million children live in relative low income after housing costs, with poverty increasingly affecting working families. The strategy aims to lift 550,000 children out of poverty by the end of the current parliament and increase household incomes for over 7 million children. It combines immediate action to boost family



incomes, reduce the cost of essentials and strengthen local support, alongside longer-term system reform.

Key measures include removing the two-child limit, expanding free school meals, increasing the National Living Wage, investing in childcare, and rolling out Best Start Family Hubs. The strategy emphasises partnership working with local authorities, devolved governments and families with lived experience to deliver sustained reductions in child poverty and improve outcomes for children.

Department for Work and Pensions, and Government Social Research Profession. Child Poverty Strategy: parents and carers research.

The research examines how families currently living in poverty in the UK manage essential costs and financial challenges, and it directly informed the development of the Government's Child Poverty Strategy above. A forum of parents and carers was established by the Child Poverty Taskforce to gather lived-experience insights into everyday expenses such as housing, food, energy, school costs, health needs, savings, and debt.

The research highlights how parents balance rising costs and limited resources, revealing struggles to afford necessities and maintain financial resilience. These real-world experiences were used alongside other analytical evidence to ensure that the Child Poverty Strategy reflects the voices and priorities of those most affected by poverty today and to guide policy measures aimed at reducing child poverty and supporting family wellbeing.

Ofsted and, Care Quality Commission. The experiences of children with SEND who are not in school: a thematic review.

The research examines the experiences of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who are not currently attending school in England. Based on a thematic review of evidence, the report highlights the wide range of circumstances that lead to children being out of school—including social, health, behavioural and systemic factors—and the significant impact on their wellbeing, learning and development. It emphasises that many children with SEND face inconsistent support, barriers to accessing appropriate provision, and insufficient coordination between education, health and care services.

The review also underscores the importance of early intervention, personalised planning and stronger multi-agency collaboration to promote positive outcomes. It calls for improved data collection and understanding of out-of-school experiences, alongside policy and practice changes to ensure that children with SEND receive consistent, tailored support both inside and outside school settings. This evidence aims to inform future strategies to better meet the needs of children with SEND.



Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Poverty in Northern England.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of poverty trends and drivers in Northern Ireland, revealing that progress on reducing poverty, especially child poverty, has largely stalled. Around 330,000 people (17% of the population) are living in poverty, and approximately 110,000 children (about 1 in 4) continue to grow up in low-income households. A majority of people in poverty are in working families, with low pay and insecure hours limiting financial security despite employment.



The report finds that relying solely on work will not shift the poverty dial and calls for bold policy action. It recommends introducing a targeted child payment through the social security system and pursuing labour market and housing reforms to make a tangible difference to families' lives. The analysis stresses the need for political leadership, cross-government action and renewed investment to improve outcomes for children and families in Northern Ireland.

Education Policy Institute. Edtech decision-making and inclusive practice: Insights from Multi-Academy Trusts.

The report by the Education Policy Institute examines how Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) in England make strategic choices about educational technology (edtech) and use it to support inclusive practice, including for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The paper draws on reflections from roundtable discussions with MAT leaders, policymakers, parliamentarians and researchers, exploring how decisions are taken, what information is used and what criteria are prioritised. It highlights that MATs often seek value for money, evidence of impact and contextual relevance when selecting edtech, but face challenges due to the lack of national standards and clear evidence on quality and effectiveness.



The report also discusses strategies MATs use to integrate technology consistently across their schools and to enhance inclusion, while underscoring the need for better guidance, collaboration and evidence to support decision-making in a rapidly evolving edtech landscape.

Tools and Guidance

Children's Commissioner. 'What I wish my parents or carers knew...': A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives.

A practical guide published by the Children's Commissioner to support parents and carers in understanding and navigating children's digital lives. It draws on children's own voices about their online experiences, highlighting what young people wish adults knew about social media, gaming, connection, risk and wellbeing.

The guide offers straightforward advice on talking about screens, setting boundaries that work for individual families, and recognising both the benefits and challenges of

online engagement. It encourages adults to build trustful conversations, understand common digital harms (such as cyberbullying and inappropriate content), and support children in developing digital resilience and critical thinking. The resource also signposts tools, approaches and questions families can use together to balance safety and autonomy. By centring children’s perspectives, the guide aims to make digital parenting more informed, empathetic and effective.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Youth Futures Hubs.

The UK Government has introduced Young Futures Hubs, a new programme designed to improve outcomes for young people in England by bringing together local services in accessible community spaces. These hubs are part of the broader *Young Futures* commitment, alongside Young Futures Prevention Partnerships, aimed at ensuring young people have better access to support and opportunities regardless of background.

The report states that over the next four years, 50 hubs will be established, with eight “early adopter” local authorities receiving funding this year to design and deliver the first pilots. Each hub will serve young people aged 10–18 and is intended to achieve three core outcomes: increasing opportunities, improving mental health and wellbeing, and reducing crime.

Young Futures Hubs will offer both physical and digital inclusive spaces, bringing together youth-led activities such as arts, sports, volunteering and skills development with coordinated support services. Their design and delivery are locally led and shaped by community needs.

LGA. Supporting inclusive early education: A good practice guide.

The guide highlights effective local authority approaches to increasing access and participation in early education, particularly for disadvantaged 2-year-olds eligible for funded places. It draws on research and roundtable discussions with local authorities that achieved higher than expected take-up in challenging contexts and distils practical strategies that can be adapted more widely.

The guide emphasises the importance of proactive family engagement, including targeted communication, personalised outreach and partnerships with trusted community services such as family hubs and health visitors. It also recommends regular data checks to ensure eligible children are identified and followed up, tailored support to help families choose appropriate settings, and ongoing support after take-up to improve attendance and satisfaction.

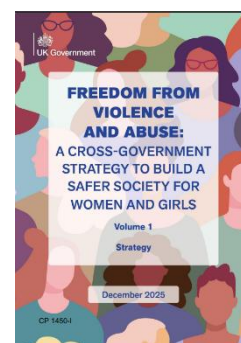


Criminal Justice

Reports

Home Office. Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy.

The report sets out a ten-year, cross-government strategy to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) in England and build a safer society. The strategy recognises VAWG as a national emergency requiring sustained action across government, public services, communities and wider society. It is structured around three core pillars: prevention and early intervention, the relentless pursuit of perpetrators, and comprehensive support for victims and survivors.



Key priorities include tackling misogyny and harmful attitudes, strengthening policing and the criminal justice response, improving safeguarding for children and young people, and reforming fragmented victim support systems. The strategy also addresses emerging harms such as online and technology-facilitated abuse and emphasises a whole-of-society approach involving education, employers, civil society and communities. Progress will be monitored through clear accountability and regular reporting to ensure long-term, system-wide change.

Ministry of Justice. Evaluation of incentivised substance free living wings in prisons.

Incentivised Substance Free Living wings (ISFLs) are dedicated areas within prisons designed to support prisoners who want to live drug-free. These wings provide a structured, calm environment where residents agree to a behavioural compact, take part in regular drug testing, and receive incentives such as more time out of cell or access to additional equipment and activities. ISFLs aim to create safer, more stable spaces that help prisoners focus on recovery, build positive relationships, and develop skills that support healthier choices.

The first study was a process evaluation, which explored how ISFLs were being delivered in three prisons. Using interviews, focus groups, and observations, researchers gathered the views and experiences of staff and prisoners to understand how the wings were operating in practice, what was helping to create a safe and supportive environment, and what could be improved.

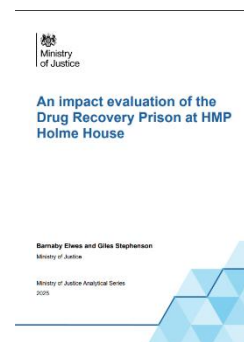
The second study was an impact evaluation, which used a waitlist randomised controlled trial across 4 prisons to examine whether ISFLs support a more stable prison environment. Prisoners on waiting lists for ISFL places were randomly allocated either to move to the ISFL sooner or to remain on a standard wing for at least three months. The study then compared the 2 groups using routinely collected prison data on incidents such as assaults, self-harm, and disorder, providing robust evidence on the impact of ISFLs on prison stability.



Ministry of Justice. Impact evaluation of the drug recovery prison at HMP Holme House.

The evaluation assesses whether a pilot “whole-prison” approach to tackling substance misuse reduced reoffending among people leaving custody. Using a robust propensity score matching method, the study compared reoffending outcomes for prisoners held at Holme House with similar prisoners in other Category C prisons.

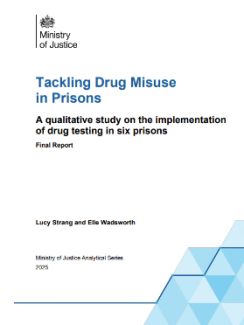
The evaluation finds that the Drug Recovery Prison did not reduce reoffending, and in some cases reoffending outcomes were slightly worse than for comparable prisons, particularly among prisoners identified as having drug-related needs. While the programme successfully implemented enhanced security, treatment and recovery-focused initiatives, the findings suggest that these changes were insufficient on their own to influence post-release behaviour. The report highlights the importance of post-release support, longer timeframes for cultural change, and the limits of prison-based interventions in addressing wider drivers of reoffending such as housing, employment and community support.



Ministry of Justice. Tackling drug misuse in prisons: a qualitative study of the implementation of drug testing in 6 prisons.

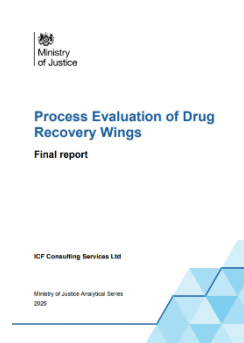
The report presents findings from a qualitative study examining how mandatory drug testing is implemented across six adult male prisons in England. Drawing on interviews, focus groups and observations with staff and prisoners, the report finds that drug misuse is widespread and closely linked to safety risks, violence and poor wellbeing. While mandatory drug testing is widely supported as a norm-setting tool, the study concludes that current approaches are constrained by staffing shortages, testing delays and limited coordination between prison teams.

The emphasis on meeting testing targets and applying sanctions was often viewed as counterproductive, with little deterrent effect and unintended harms. The report highlights the potential benefits of a more rehabilitative, whole-system approach, including personalised responses, trauma-informed practice and better access to treatment and purposeful activity. It recommends rebalancing resources towards recovery-focused support and improving system integration to address the drivers of drug use more effectively.



Ministry of Justice. Process Evaluation of Drug Recovery Wings.

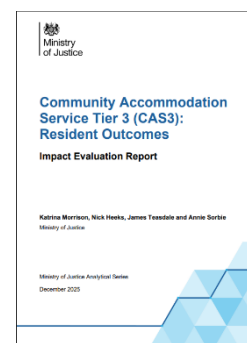
The report examines how abstinence-based Drug Recovery Wings (DRWs) have been implemented across six prisons in England and Wales. The evaluation finds that DRWs have created safer, recovery-focused environments, with many prisoners reporting improved physical and mental wellbeing, stronger relationships with staff, and greater motivation to maintain abstinence. Effective delivery was linked to strong leadership, dedicated and trained staff, and clear separation from the general prison population. However, the report identifies challenges including workforce capacity, difficulties moving prisoners on after completing the programme, and limited continuity of support on release.



Evidence of reduced substance use and incidents was mixed, reflecting variations in delivery and data quality. The evaluation concludes that DRWs show promise in supporting recovery in custody but require longer-term investment, clearer pathways, and stronger links to community services to achieve sustained outcomes.

Ministry of Justice. Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3): Resident Outcomes.

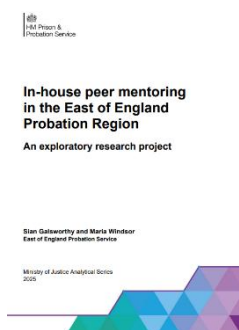
The evaluation examines the effectiveness of Community Accommodation Service Tier 3 (CAS3), which provides short-term accommodation and support for people leaving prison who would otherwise be homeless. The evaluation assesses whether CAS3 improves outcomes including accommodation stability, compliance with licence conditions and reduced reoffending.



Using linked administrative data and comparison groups, the study finds that CAS3 has been successful in reducing immediate homelessness on release and supporting access to accommodation during the critical post-release period. However, evidence of longer-term impacts on reoffending and sustained housing outcomes is mixed. The report highlights variation in local delivery models, support intensity and move-on options, which influence outcomes. It concludes that while CAS3 plays an important role in preventing rough sleeping at the point of release, stronger pathways into longer-term housing and improved integration with probation, housing and support services are needed to maximise impact.

HM Prison and Probation Service. In-house peer mentoring in the East of England probation region.

The report explores how people with lived experience of the criminal justice system are trained and supported as volunteer peer mentors within probation services. Based on interviews with mentors, mentees, probation staff and programme coordinators, the research finds that peer mentoring provides significant benefits, including improved wellbeing, confidence and motivation for mentors, and emotional, practical and relational support for people on probation.



Mentors help individuals engage more effectively with probation services, access wider support and build trust during key transition periods such as release from custody. The report also highlights challenges, including limited resources, reliance on volunteers, unclear role boundaries and tensions between rehabilitative support and probation's risk-management responsibilities. Overall, the study concludes that in-house peer mentoring shows strong promise but requires sustained investment, clearer role definitions and consistent organisational support to operate safely and effectively.

LGA. Sanctuary Schemes Survey.

Following the independent evaluation on the implementation of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which highlighted the need for further research into Sanctuary Schemes, the Local Government Association (LGA), MHCLG and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) are working in partnership to understand how Sanctuary Schemes are currently being delivered.



As part of this, in September 2025, the LGA sent an online survey to all 296 single-tier and district authorities in England, and to the 22 unitary authorities in Wales. Responses were not actively sought from county councils as the survey was initially targeted at directors of housing or equivalent, and housing responsibilities are usually held at a district level. However, two counties which implemented schemes in their areas on behalf of their districts provided responses. A total of 126 local authorities responded to the survey, including 39 per cent of single tier and district councils.

Additional, in-depth research is underway, commissioned by MHCLG, to understand how Sanctuary Schemes are working in practice. This includes case studies with eight areas and interviews with professionals and survivors, to conclude in Spring 2026, with publication to follow.

Prison Reform Trust. A Measure of Hope? How purpose, meaning and fulfilment can ease the harms of long-term imprisonment.

The report explores how purpose, meaning and fulfilment affect people serving long-term prison sentences in England and Wales and how these factors can mitigate the harms of extended imprisonment. Based on the voices of 123 people serving long sentences, the report describes how prolonged “dead time,” institutionalisation and loss of agency can erode hope, leading to stagnation and disengagement behind bars. It shows that maintaining hope is linked to positive behaviour, engagement with education, peer support and family ties, while meaningful daily activities and a sense of personal integrity help prisoners retain identity and resilience.



The report sets out practical recommendations, including expanding opportunities for progression, strengthening roles that help sustain hope, better support for maintaining family connections, and using a co-designed Hope and Fulfilment Survey to inform practice and policy across the prison estate.

Clinks. How voluntary sector organisations can influence Public Opinion on Crime.

The report brings together evidence on how attitudes to crime and justice are shaped, and how voluntary sector organisations can engage more effectively with public debate. Drawing on research from the UK and internationally, the evidence library shows that public





opinion on crime is often driven by emotion, narratives and media framing, rather than detailed knowledge of the justice system. It highlights that punitive attitudes are not fixed and can shift when people are exposed to stories that emphasise rehabilitation, prevention, fairness and effectiveness.

The report identifies approaches that can influence opinion, including using trusted messengers, centring lived experience, framing messages around shared values, and avoiding language that reinforces fear or stereotypes. It also stresses the importance of long-term, coordinated communications rather than reactive responses. Overall, the resource aims to support voluntary sector organisations to communicate more confidently and strategically about crime and justice reform.

Briefings

Clinks. The Young Review: 10 years on.

The briefing reflects on progress made since Lord Young's original review of the criminal justice system's response to young adults aged 18–24 and assesses what has changed over the past decade. Drawing on evidence, stakeholder insight and lived experience, the report finds that while awareness of the distinct needs of young adults has increased, systemic change has been uneven and fragile. Young adults continue to be over-represented in the criminal justice system and face poorer outcomes than older adults, particularly those experiencing multiple disadvantage.

The review highlights positive developments, including specialist services and improved understanding of maturity, but notes that funding instability, fragmented delivery and inconsistent leadership have limited impact. It calls for renewed commitment to a distinct young adult approach, including age-appropriate services, sustained investment, and stronger cross-government accountability to improve outcomes and reduce reoffending.