



CordisPulse

March 2022

Welcome to March'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.

Earlier this month, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published its report on [Child sexual exploitation by organised networks](#). It highlighted extensive failures by local authorities and police forces. The report notes that children are being sexually exploited by networks in all parts of England and Wales in the '*most degrading and destructive ways*', with many exploited children raped or sexually assaulted repeatedly, over a period of months or even years. Failures are partly the result of flawed assumptions that child sexual exploitation was decreasing, when in fact, it has become more of a hidden problem, increasingly underreported when only linked to other forms of criminal behaviour such as county lines. Organisations are also failing to keep pace with the changing nature of child sexual exploitation by networks.

This report presents some worrying findings that, unfortunately, mirror our own experiences of helping organisations effectively and responsively tackle this issue. The overlap between child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation means that children are too often treated as perpetrators and not victims. The wide range of needs that these children present with means that organisations often struggle to provide adequate and meaningful support. Findings from this report reaffirm the need for multi-agency working to effectively tackle issues of child sexual exploitation. If you would like to discuss these issues further, please email Kam Kaur at kamkaur@cordisbright.co.uk.

Furthermore, 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 and 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

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

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

Cordis Bright News

Opportunities for Consultants and Senior Consultants

Cordis Bright is looking to recruit Senior Consultants and Consultants to help meet our aspirations to grow and meet the increasing demand for our services. We are particularly interested in applications from those with a background in research and evaluation, but also welcome applications from those with an interest in other aspects of our work such as consultancy, change management and performance turnaround. We also value sector-specific experience which has been gained in previous work in the fields of social care, health, and criminal justice. For further information about the roles visit our [website](#). The deadline for applications is 10 am on Monday, 28 March 2022.

Children's Social Care Conference. Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Learning

Later this month, we are contributing to the Department for Education Children's Social Care Conference about extremism and radicalisation safeguarding learning. These will be held on the 22nd of March in London (9 am-4.30 pm), and on the 29th of March in Birmingham (9 am-4.30 pm). To register your interest, please visit the following Eventbrite pages:

- [London, March 22nd](#)
- [Birmingham, March 29th](#)

Research on domestic abuse perpetrator programmes

Cordis Bright is pleased to be one of 21 organisations that have been successful in securing funding from the Home Office for research projects on perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Our research will explore the feasibility of using routinely collected data to demonstrate the impact of domestic abuse perpetrator programmes (DAPPs). In addition, we will explore the feasibility of using routinely collected data to support the early identification of domestic abuse perpetrators. We will also be developing a toolkit to support commissioners and providers evaluate DAPPs. For further information about the projects visit the [Home Office](#).

Screening and assessment in youth justice interventions

This briefing provides an overview of screening and assessment in a youth justice context.

It is based on a rapid literature review of youth justice interventions in the UK and Europe, USA, Canada, and Australia. We explore the definition and role of screening



and assessment in youth justice interventions and establish why screening is used in a youth justice setting.

We propose seven key principles of good practice for screening tools in youth justice: specialist or clinical input, use of a scoring system, brief and straightforward, validity, reliability, and standardization, well-trained practitioners, clarity of process, and creating a safe space.

Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

Department of Health and Social Care. Health and social care integration: joining up care for people, places, and populations

This white paper sets out measures needed to make integrated health and social care a universal reality for everyone across England regardless of their condition and of where they live. It sets out plans to join up care for: patients and service users; staff looking for ways to better support increasing numbers of people with care needs; and organisations delivering these services to the local population.

In particular, the white paper sets out the government's approach to:

- Designing shared outcomes which will place person-centred care, improving population health and reducing health disparities at the centre of plans for reform, and ensuring that accompanying oversight arrangements and regulatory structures have a clear focus on the planning and delivery of these outcomes.
- Strengthening the health and care services in places that feel familiar to the people living in them. While strategic, at-scale planning is carried out at the Integrated Care System (ICS) level, places will be the engine for delivery and reform.
- Introducing an expectation for a single person, accountable at place level, across health and social care, accountable for delivering shared outcomes and strong, effective leadership.
- Making progress on the key enablers of integration (workforce, digital and data and financial pooling and alignment) which is required to further join up services around people and populations.
- Reinforcing the role of robust regulatory mechanisms to support the delivery of integrated care at the place level.

The Health Foundation. Addressing the leading risk factors for ill-health

This Health Foundation report states that the UK's health looks increasingly frayed and unequal. Even prior to the pandemic, people were living more years in poor health, gains in life expectancy had stalled, and inequalities were widening. This has a costly impact on individuals, communities, public services, and the economy.

The Health Foundation suggest that there are stark warning signs that government needs to shift its approach to improve health. Rates of childhood obesity have risen sharply in recent years and inequalities have widened. Smoking remains stubbornly high among those living in more



deprived areas. Alcohol-related hospital admissions and deaths have increased, and rates of harmful drinking have gone up. Physical activity levels also remain low and appear to have declined during the pandemic.

This report reviews government policies to address these risk factors in England between 2016 and 2021. It assesses the government's approach and identifies future policy priorities, finding that:

- The government has relied heavily on policies aimed at changing individual behaviour.
- The approach has been uneven across risk factors, with particularly weak action on alcohol.
- Decision making across departments has been disjointed, undermining health improvement targets.

The Health Foundation state that the upcoming health disparities white paper must present a coherent long-term strategy to address major health risk factors. The government will need to adopt multiple policy approaches, focusing on population-level action to alter the environments in which people live.

The Health Foundation. Public perceptions of the NHS and social care: performance, policy, and expectations

This Health Foundation report examines public perceptions and expectations of health and social care. It finds that:

- Overall, the public is pessimistic about the state of the NHS and social care, with 57% of individuals thinking that the general standard of care provided by the NHS has got worse in the last 12 months, and 69% of individuals agreeing that the standard of social care services has deteriorated.
- Perceptions of the NHS locally and nationally are now very similar, which contrasts to previous years where local NHS services have been viewed more positively than the NHS overall. Less than half of the individuals surveyed think that the NHS is providing a good service nationally (44%) or locally (42%).
- In England, despite the government beginning a wide-ranging reform agenda and committing substantial additional funding to the NHS, few people (9% of people surveyed) think that the UK government has the right policies for the NHS.
- 58% of individuals supported the government's decision to raise taxes to spend more on the NHS and social care, with only 22% opposing it.

NHS England. Mental health clinically led review of standards.

This report sets out the wide-ranging support received through the national consultation on the proposed new standards for mental health care and highlights some of the key considerations to support their successful implementation.

Consultation responses included the following recommendations:

- Building on existing access standards for mental health should be introduced in a way that does not lead to an environment where assessment is prioritised over treatment, or the threshold to access treatment raised.
- There is strong support to try and improve access to timely mental health support as and where needed by service users.
- The benefits of integrated and partnership working across public sector bodies, as well as the voluntary sector, need to be encouraged and supported. Respondents were keen to ensure that standards recognise the value of early intervention in preventing the escalation of mental health conditions, particularly through embracing multi-agency working and holistic care across social care, education, and the voluntary sector.
- It is particularly important to continue to monitor service demand for mental health services. Focusing on monitoring waiting times is likely to support systems to concentrate on managing flow through the mental health system.
- It is important to clearly define measures and pathways to allow service users, their families and carers to know which service to access and what to expect when they seek support. Respondents stated that this will be empowering and potentially prevent escalation in some cases.

Briefings

Department of Health and Social Care. Workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and Social Care

This report sets out the response by the government to the Health and Social Care Committee's report on workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care.

Key responses to the committee's key recommendations included:

The scale and impact of workforce burnout:

- A suggestion is that the annual NHS staff survey is used as a way to measure progress on staff health and wellbeing. The Wellbeing Dashboard was promoted, which includes benchmarking data for all NHS providers and systems, allowing boards and Wellbeing Guardians to make a more rounded assessment of staff

health and wellbeing, learn from other peers, and identify and make improvements over time.

- The government acknowledged the importance of investing in staff health and wellbeing. They stated that integrated care systems have been asked to consider the wellbeing of health and care workforces in their offers, and to make use of the assets and capacity across the health and care system to facilitate access to wellbeing support for NHS and social care workers.

Workforce culture:

- The government stated that they will explore, with the sector, whether and how Freedom to Speak Up Guardians could be created in social care.

The impact of COVID-19

- An outline of the measures the government have put in place for staff and health wellbeing in the context of the pandemic. These include measures such as making full use of the annual leave policy and flexing it to create additional options for staff and enhancing mental and occupational health support.
- An appeal to capture learning and embed the examples of teamwork, innovation and excellence in practice and leadership the pandemic has brought to the health and social care sectors. The government stated that support will be provided for systems to embed innovative approaches and support frontline staff in developing their own local solutions towards releasing capacity in outpatients, diagnostics, patient pathways and general practice.

Office for National Statistics. Outcomes for disabled people in the UK: 2021

This analysis explores a selection of outcomes for disabled people in the UK. It presents a summary of findings for a number of topics, such as employment, education, well-being, loneliness, crime, and social participation. Some key statistics include:

- Compared with the year ending June 2020, the proportion of disabled people with a degree as their highest qualification increased by 1.9 percentage points; there was also a lower proportion of disabled people having no qualification (a decrease of 1.9 percentage points).
- Around half of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years (53.5%) in the UK were in employment compared with around 8 in 10 (81.6%) for non-disabled people. Disabled people with severe or specific learning difficulties, autism and mental illness had the lowest employment rates.
- The proportion of disabled people aged 16 years and over in England who reported feeling lonely “often or always” (15.1%) was over four times that of non-disabled people (3.6%).

Tools and Guidance

NHS England. Supporting male victims/ survivors accessing a sexual assault referral centre: good practice guide

This guide intends to educate and guide staff working in sexual assault referral centres (SARC) to better enable males, including those from diverse communities, to access the support of a SARC following sexual assault and abuse.

The guide provides information on the barriers male victims/ survivors face which may prevent them from seeking support following a sexual assault. It also emphasises the need for a 'gender-inclusive' approach, which includes tailoring services, acknowledging protected characteristics, and providing different choices in how services are delivered and lastly; the importance of gathering feedback on services, both from those who have accessed the SARC and those who have chosen not to proceed with support to try and ensure the service is as good as it can be at reaching all those who need it.

Children and Young People's Services

Reports

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Child sexual exploitation by organised networks

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published a report on the sexual exploitation of children by organised networks. It noted that there appeared to be a flawed assumption that child sexual exploitation was decreasing, when in reality it has become more of a hidden problem, increasingly underreported when only linked to other forms of criminal behaviour such as county lines.

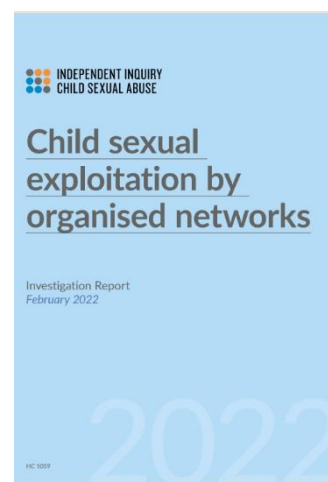
The report noted that perpetrators are finding new ways, through mobile phones, social media and dating apps, to groom and abuse younger children.

Furthermore, the report finds that professional language around sexual exploitation has developed over many years, which describes children being 'at risk' despite clear evidence of actual harm having occurred.

Finally, the report emphasises that too many victims of child exploitation are treated as offenders or somehow responsible for the harms done to them, whilst the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are often not investigated or prosecuted. As such, the report calls for the need for more effort to be made in prosecuting perpetrators effectively, and the law recognising the gravity of this particular form of abuse and its impact on children.

The report makes six recommendations to both the UK and Welsh governments, police forces and local authorities. These are:

- The government strengthen the response of the criminal justice system by amending the Sentencing Act 2020 to provide a mandatory aggravating factor in sentencing those convicted of offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children.
- The government publish an enhanced version of their Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit, containing more specific guidance in certain areas such as defining Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- The DfE should review and publish an updated version of its guidance on CSE, clarifying the definition of CSE and providing detailed information on areas such as the role of the internet in CSE and how to identify and respond to CSE.



- The DfE and the Welsh Government must ensure that updated national guidance makes it clear that signs a child is being sexually exploited must never be treated as indications that a child is only at risk of experiencing this harm.
- Police forces and local authorities must collect specific data using accurate and consistent methods, disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, and disability on all cases of known or suspected CSE. These should be separated from other data sets, including data on child sexual abuse.
- The DfE should ban the placement of 16 and 17-year-old children who have experienced or are at heightened risk of experiencing, CSE in semi-independent and independent settings.

National Federation for Educational Research. Investigating the potential use of long-term school and college destination measures

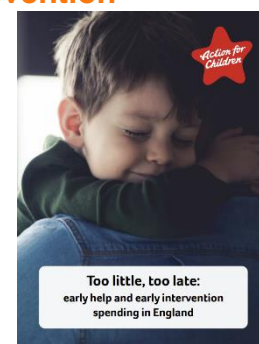
This report investigates whether existing data could help construct useful, supportive information for schools and colleges based on the longer-term destinations of former students. The report finds that:



- The institution at which a young person studies their post-16 qualifications is associated with having a small but significant impact on their longer-term earnings and employment outcomes.
- Context should be considered when understanding and interpreting destination measures, as young people's progression pathways systematically differ based on their background characteristics.

Action for Children. Too little, too late: early help and early intervention spending in England

This report looks at the landscape of early help provision for children and families. It states that not enough early help is happening, that local authorities have sharply cut early intervention spending, and that there is significant variation in early help provision between local authorities. Action for Children's recommendations are:



- That a **legal duty should be introduced for early help**. Action for Children states that this will help protect services from cuts and raise minimum standards of provision. They also urge local authorities to ensure that they have sufficient capacity for early help to meet the needs of local children and families.
- The report **urges the government to commit to increasing funding for early intervention services**. The report states that an increase of £1.93 billion above 2019-20 spend levels is needed to match the per child spend of 2010-11.

- Action for Children **urges local authorities to collect more data on early help provision and outcomes.** For instance, in how much early help the authority provides, and what services families receive.

The Early Intervention Foundation. Leading and delivering early childhood services: 10 insights from 20 places across England and Wales

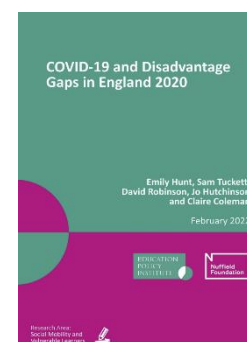
This report gives 10 insights for leading maternity and early years services based on learning from the 20 local areas in England and Wales that used the Early Intervention Foundation's maternity and early years maturity matrix planning tool in 2021. It states that if local areas are to realise the potential of early intervention for children, it will require a coordinated, resourced and long-term response with action at both the national and local levels. The report's 10 key insights are:



- Drive the quality of local strategic planning.
- Plan with the whole local resource in mind.
- Get the leadership right.
- Support communities to drive change.
- Get the most out of evidence-based interventions.
- Make multi-agency working work.
- Face the challenge of sharing personal data.
- Information for families: a right not a gift.
- Step up on measuring outcomes and experience.
- Build a research practice partnership.

Education Policy Institute. Covid-19 and disadvantage gaps in England 2020.

This report examines “the disadvantage gap” which is the gap in grades between disadvantaged students and their peers. It examines the gap in 2020 at a national level, across different regions and local authorities, among varying levels of disadvantage, and at two stages of education- key stages four and five. The research offers the first comprehensive picture of the impact of 2020 grades on different students- the year that saw the first switch to teacher assessed grades. It finds that:



- The gap in GCSE grades between students in long-term poverty and their better-off peers has failed to improve over the last 10 years.
- More students have now fallen into longer-term poverty.
- Fears that the switch to teacher assessed grades for GCSEs in 2020 would penalise students from disadvantaged backgrounds are largely unfounded- with no evidence poorer GCSE students lost out under this system.
- However, for students in college and sixth form (16-19 education), the gap in grades between poorer students and their better-off peers widened in 2020. This was driven by A level students gaining a whole grade more from teacher assessments than those who studied qualifications such as BTECs.

Briefings

NSPCC. Child sexual exploitation by organised networks investigation report: CASPAR briefing.

This briefing provides an overview of the key themes covered within a report by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse on child sexual exploitation (CSE) by organised networks in England and Wales (See above for a summary of this report).

NSPCC. Children's experiences of legal but harmful content online.

This briefing uses insight from Childline counselling sessions and NSPCC helpline contacts to highlight the experiences of young people who have viewed legal but harmful content online. It focuses on pornography and material which promotes or glorifies eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide. Some key findings from the briefing include:

- Some children told Childline they had actively searched for legal but harmful content, while others had “stumbled” across it unintentionally.
- Some children told the Childline and the NSPCC that they found themselves drawn into searching for additional and more extreme content, with some children feeling that particular forms of legal but harmful content helped them to deal with difficult issues they were facing.
- Being exposed to legal but harmful content can impact a child's mental and emotional wellbeing; with some children telling the NSPCC that they were experiencing anxiety, intrusive thoughts, low self-esteem, and trouble sleeping.
- The NSPCC reported that some adults contacting their helpline were unclear on the role of social media companies and believed that more could be done to keep their channels safe for children.

NSPCC. Statistics briefing: the impact of coronavirus

This briefing looks at what data and statistics are available around the impact of coronavirus on children and their families. It focuses on mental health and wellbeing, levels of abuse, pressure on parents and carers and the availability of support services. The NSPCC state:

- The pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many children.
- Although data is limited, there are indicators that some forms of child abuse have increased during the pandemic.
- The pandemic has placed many families under heightened pressure, with data showing it has impacted many people's relationships, financial situations, and physical and mental health.
- Professionals who would normally be providing children and families with support as well as identifying and referring child protection concerns have not been seeing children and families as regularly as usual.
- Levels of child protection referrals have dropped across the UK.

Children's Commissioner. Briefing on children's mental health services- 2020/2021

This is the fifth annual briefing on children's mental health services in England. The report aims to assess children's ability to access Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) in England in 2020/21, and how this has changed over the past two years. It finds that:



- Nationally, spending on specialist NHS mental health services for children has increased for the fourth consecutive year across the majority of CCGs.
- Half of CCGs spend at least 1% of their budget on CYPMHS.
- The number of children referred to NHS children's mental health services has decreased for the first time in four years.
- More children have been struggling with their mental health since 2017, with data suggesting that one in six children have a probable mental health disorder.
- For those children who are accepted into mental health treatment services, average waiting times have decreased substantially from last year, from 42 days to 32 days.

Tools and Guidance

Rees Centre. Born into care: developing best practice guidelines for when the state intervenes at birth, review of current guidance documents

This review of guidance covers professional practice concerning parent/ infant separation within the first few days of life.

The guidance affirms the need for a careful balance between advising on best practices to ensure that both the infant's and mother's needs are adequately met. It states that there is little guidance on best practices towards mothers or fathers around the birth, the time spent in hospital or the period after the separation. As such, the review calls for guidance to point practitioners towards best practices in supporting parents as well as infants over the whole period from conception to after the separation. It also states that special consideration will need to be paid to supporting parents with specific needs, such as those with learning disabilities, where no guidance appears to be currently available.

Furthermore, the review urges for a feasibility study to be undertaken to explore how Best Practice Guidelines can be fully integrated into existing systems and programmes, and how guidelines might inform and be informed by national guidance and link up with local and regional guidance where appropriate.

Lastly, the review affirms the need to explore how guidelines can be used as a basis for developing a continuous pathway that links midwifery practices with that of health visitors, social workers, family justice professionals and all the many people who have responsibility for safeguarding infants and supporting parents, including members of their immediate and extended family.



Born into Care: Developing Best Practice Guidelines for when the State Intervenes at Birth
Review of current guidance documents

February 2012
Harriet Ward, Karen Woodhead
Public Health and Practice Unit
Leeds University
Rees Centre

Criminal Justice

Reports

National Crime Agency: Serious Crime Analysis Section: Sexual offences initiated via online dating

This report looks at the increasing number of serious sexual offences linked to online dating websites and apps. Some key findings from the report include:

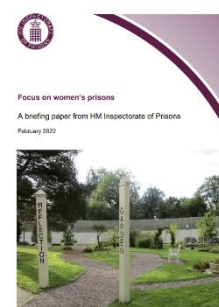
- The victims in 83% of offences were female, 17% were male. This is a slight change from the previous report with a 2% increase in the proportion of male victims.
- Although the largest proportion of female victims (41%) were in the 20-29 age groups, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion aged 19 or under since the 2016 report (22% compared with 12%).
- 31% of the male victims were aged 19 or under, an increase from 25%.
- 74% of offences were committed at the victim's or offender's residence
- 47% of suspects for these offences have a previous conviction, compared with 54% of all named suspects on the SCAS database.
- The Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) reviewed nearly 10 times as many cases of internet dating sexual offences, compared to bogus taxi driver sexual offences. Internet dating cases were also more prevalent than burglary-initiated offences dealt with by SCAS in 2020/21. However, they state that the pandemic influenced this, with lockdown measures impacting these other forms of offending.

Briefings

HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Focus on women's prisons: A briefing paper from HM Inspectorate of Prisons

This briefing describes the findings, best practices, and key areas for improvement from inspections of five women's prisons. It states that:

- Despite clear evidence of acutely mentally unwell women going into prison because of a lack of suitable provision for mental health support in the community, there is no systematic process for gathering data nationally, which means that neither the prison service, the courts or the Department for Health and Social Care know the extent of the problem.
- More women than men entering prison declare a problem with drugs and alcohol.
- Individualised and proactive care for the most vulnerable must be at the heart of prisons.



- Rebuilding support to promote a positive relationship with children and families must be a priority for all women's prisons.
- Positive and meaningful working relationships can be one of the keys to achieving better outcomes for women, with a clear understanding and application of trauma-informed ways of working being fundamental to good staff-prisoner relationships. Survey results stated that 75% of women said that most staff had treated them with respect, and 84% stated that they had somebody that they could turn to for help. These rates were higher than results recorded for men (70% and 70% respectively).
- All women should be able to access comprehensive resettlement help. This briefing finds that a lack of housing is a critical risk factor for women. However, it states that the data is so unreliable that it makes it impossible to know how many women have been released to suitable, safe, and sustainable accommodation.

Tools and Guidance

Probation Service Management of Young Adults Policy Framework

The Probation Service Policy Framework sets out the requirements for Probation Practitioners when working with Young Adults between 18 and 25 years old, who are in contact with the Probation Service. It also provides supplementary guidance and signposts to other resources that support work with this age group of People on Probation.



The guidance also emphasises the importance of taking developmental processes into account and attending to the young adults' risks and needs in an individualised way in order to deliver change work and reduce the likelihood of re-offending and harm. This includes considerations of the maturity of the young person. The proposal should state how the sentence will address and manage such maturity issues.

Furthermore, it states the principles that underpin a good transition for a young adult between youth and adult probation services. This includes that:

- Individual needs and safeguarding requirements are recognised and addressed
- That every child who could transfer to adult services have a transition plan that focuses on providing flexible and continuous services tailored to meet individual needs, with both services working together to maintain interventions and progress
- Transition planning considers the individual's diversity issues; notably protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010
- Children and their families or carers be actively involved in planning for their transition and understand and agree with the plans in place

- Each transition is reviewed and services seek continuous improvement and facilitate the journey towards a positive future and desistance from offending, building on skills, strengths, and interests.

The guidance includes information on the importance of ensuring practitioners are aware and make considerations for young adults from ethnic minority backgrounds, young women, care leavers and care experienced, neurodivergent individuals and young adults with adverse childhood experiences in order to understand each individual's different experiences and insight into their offending behaviour, and their journey towards desistance.

Clinks. Navigating the criminal justice system: A guide for voluntary organisations working in the criminal justice system in England and Wales

This guide is aimed at individuals new to working or volunteering in the criminal justice system, to help understand how the criminal justice system is organised and how it works. It provides a diagram showing the interlinkages between stakeholders such as the Home Office, Youth Offending Services, Probation Services and Crown Courts in the criminal justice system.

