Cordis Pulse

November 2026

Welcome to November's edition of the Cordis Pulse – 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.

This month, we're pleased to share two Cordis Bright publications. The first is the evaluation protocol for *Choices and Consequences*, the Ben Kinsella Trust's knife crime education workshop, funded by the *Youth Endowment Fund*. The study will combine a large-scale cluster randomised controlled trial with an implementation, process and cost evaluation, helping to build stronger evidence about what works in knife crime education. The second is our final evaluation of *Changemakers Programme*, on behalf of *Foundations - What Works Centre for Children & Families* which found that dedicated local evidence leadership made a real difference to implementing evidence-based interventions in children's services.

A common thread this month is the gap between national ambition and local reality. The Children's Commissioner's Childhood Lottery report and the CQC's State of Care both find that where people live shapes the support they receive. The Youth Endowment Fund's report on children below statutory thresholds and the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies' review of early help both look at how services can reach children earlier.

Elsewhere, we cover the Covid-19 Inquiry's report on the care sector, the independent review of mental health conditions, ADHD and autism, new guidance on serious violence in education, and the government's response to Lord Leveson's review of the criminal courts.

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.

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1 Cordis Bright news

1.1 Evaluation protocol published for the Choices and Consequences trial



Cordis Bright has been commissioned by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) to evaluate Choices and Consequences, the Ben Kinsella Trust's knife crime education workshop. We're pleased to share that the evaluation protocol was published in October.

Choices and Consequences is a two-hour immersive workshop held in the Trust's purpose-built exhibitions in London and Nottingham. Trained facilitators and professional actors lead it. It uses visual displays, short films, interactive activities and immersive theatre to explore the personal, social and legal consequences of knife crime, as well as peer influence, responsibility and staying safe. It avoids fear-based messaging and graphic content and focuses on building empathy instead. More than 48,000 young people have taken part since 2011.

The efficacy study has three strands:

- **A cluster randomised controlled trial (RCT)** involving around 2,900 Year 6 pupils in 116 classes. Classes are randomly allocated either to attend the workshop or to continue with their usual activities. The main outcome is pupils' willingness to carry a knife. Secondary outcomes include prosocial behaviour, peer relationships, empathy and mental wellbeing.
- **An implementation and process evaluation** looking at how the workshop is delivered, whether it is delivered as intended, and what pupils and school staff think of it.
- **A cost evaluation** estimating the resources needed to deliver the programme.

A pilot phase is running from September to December 2026. The full trial will then run until July 2028, and findings are expected in spring 2029. The study will help build stronger evidence about what works in knife crime education for primary-age children.

We're proud to be working with the Youth Endowment Fund and the Ben Kinsella Trust on this trial.

The full protocol is available here: Youth Endowment Fund: Choices and Consequences Evaluation Protocol, October 2026

1.2 Evaluation of the Changemakers programme: embedding evidence in local children's services



Cordis Bright was commissioned by Foundations, the What Works Centre for Children & Families, to evaluate its Changemakers programme. We're pleased to share that the final report has now been published.

Many evidence-based interventions (EBIs) can make a real difference for children and families. However, local authorities often struggle to get them up and running and keep them

going. Through Changemakers, Foundations funded a dedicated Local Evidence Leader (LEL) in four local authorities: Merton, Stockport, Wirral and York. Each LEL had two jobs. The first was to lead the local implementation of one or more EBIs. The second was to help build a stronger culture of using evidence in local decision-making. Strategic Leads in their councils, Foundations' Practice Development Advisers and the EBI providers all supported the LELs.

Our study was a mixed-methods implementation and process evaluation. It looked at how the Changemakers model worked in practice, what helped and what got in the way, and whether local changes were likely to last. Between late 2024 and summer 2026, we ran 12 workshops and 24 interviews with LELs, Strategic Leads, practitioners, commissioners, EBI providers and Foundations' advisers. We also drew on monitoring data, cost data and programme documents.

The evaluation found that dedicated implementation leadership made a real difference. Practitioners were often delivering EBIs on top of their usual roles. The LELs gave them the capacity to build links with referrers and partners, work with EBI providers, solve problems as they came up and secure support from senior leaders. Key findings included:

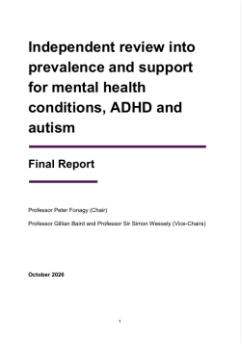
- **Local credibility matters as much as expertise.** LELs who were already known and trusted locally were better able to secure buy-in and find their way around local systems.
- **Dedicated leads can't do it alone.** Support from EBI providers and Foundations' advisers mattered far more than the original theory of change suggested.
- **Equity needs to be considered from the outset.** Reaching underserved families takes more than good recruitment. When choosing an EBI, areas also need to think about accessibility, cultural relevance and local fit.
- **Evidence use goes beyond adopting EBIs.** Building local capability includes helping people judge evidence critically and decide what works in their own context.

The report's main lesson for commissioners and policymakers is to fund implementation, not just interventions. It also recommends assessing whether an area is ready to deliver an intervention as well as whether there is a need for it, and planning for sustainability from the start. Some of the structures the LELs set up will continue, including the Raise York Research Network, Merton's parenting steering group and Stockport's EBI group. The findings have also fed into an updated theory of change for the programme.

The full report is available here: Foundations:Changemakers Implementation and Process Evaluation

2 Adult social care and health

2.1 Department of Health and Social Care. Independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism: final report



This independent review examines rising demand for mental health, ADHD and autism services in England. It finds that common mental health disorders among adults aged 16 to 64 rose from 15.5% in 1993 to 22.6% in 2024. Recorded ADHD prevalence among children aged 6 to 11 rose from 0.45% in 2000 to 2.70% in 2025.

Waiting lists are long. Open ADHD referrals exceeded 560,000 by the end of 2025, and over 254,000 people had an open autism referral. Independent providers now carry out more than half of NHS-funded ADHD assessments.

The review recommends moving from a "diagnosis-dependent" system to a "needs-led plus diagnosis" model, so that support is not conditional on a diagnosis. Its ten priority recommendations include bringing ADHD and autism assessments under CQC regulation.

2.2 Care Quality Commission. State of Care 2025/26: the state of health care and adult social care in England



The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) annual assessment finds continued pressure across health and adult social care, alongside persistent inequalities in access, quality and outcomes. It reports that where a person lives affects how long they wait and the care they receive. There has been some recovery, including more GP appointments, greater use of digital solutions and shorter waits for elective care, but progress is not keeping pace with demand.

Children and young people are a particular concern. More than 80,000 were reported to have waited over a year for a community health appointment, and waits for a first mental health contact rose by 31% over two years. In adult social care, almost three-quarters of services are rated good or outstanding. However, leadership is the area most in need of improvement, and the CQC notes consolidation in the care home market while homecare becomes more fragmented.

The CQC calls for reform that addresses workforce, funding, commissioning, prevention and inequalities together, coordinated across providers, commissioners, regulators and government.

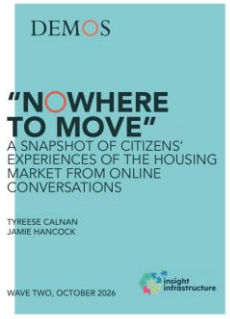
2.3 UK Health Security Agency and Department of Health and Social Care. Infection prevention and control in adult social care

This new resource brings existing infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance together in one place for all adult social care settings, including care homes, supported living, day services and home care. It covers standard and transmission-based precautions, outbreak management, common infections, vaccinations and staff health. It also includes practical adaptations for care delivered in people's own homes.

2.4 Department of Health and Social Care. Telecare and the digital switchover: guidance for housing providers

The national switchover from analogue to digital phone lines is due to be completed by January 2027. Many housing providers still use analogue telecare and warden call systems, which may become unreliable or stop working when lines migrate. This guidance sets out the actions housing providers should take on data sharing, fire safety and options for upgrading analogue systems. It supports the Telecare National Action Plan.

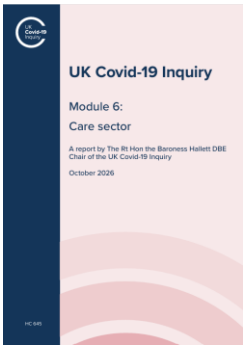
2.5 Demos and Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Nowhere to move: a snapshot of citizens' experiences of the housing market from online conversations



This report by Demos, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, analyses more than 43,000 posts from online financial hardship forums between January and April 2026. It looks in depth at 6,269 posts about housing. It finds that many people are caught between an unaffordable private rented sector and a social housing sector that is difficult to access. The report notes that 135,580 households were in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2026, a record high.

The authors make five recommendations: assess options for rent regulation, set a mandatory minimum for new social rent homes, expand Housing First, close the guarantor gap left by the Renters' Rights Act, and unfreeze and re-link Local Housing Allowance. They note that the sample is not representative, so the findings should be treated as indicative.

2.6 UK Covid-19 Inquiry. Module 6 report: the care sector



The UK Covid-19 Inquiry has published its sixth report, examining the impact of the pandemic on adult social care across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It covers care homes, care provided in people's own homes and unpaid care. The Inquiry finds that protecting the adult social care sector "appeared to be something of an afterthought", with the initial focus of all four governments on protecting hospitals. There were over 43,000 recorded deaths involving Covid-19 in care homes between March 2020 and July 2022.

Key findings include:

- Patients were discharged from hospitals to care homes in March 2020 without knowing whether they had Covid-19, and guidance on isolating them was initially missing in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Care workers faced a severe shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), and early infection control guidance was unrealistic for close-contact care.
- Strict and lengthy limits on visiting caused enormous harm to residents and their loved ones.
- Support for the UK's estimated 5.8 million unpaid carers came too late, and data gaps meant deaths in care homes were not known in real time.

The Inquiry's recommendations include clearer pandemic planning for the sector, financial support for care staff to self-isolate, guidance on decisions to limit visiting, continued inspection during emergencies, mandatory end-of-life training, and a voluntary register of the social care workforce in England.

2.7 The King's Fund. Equal access: a fairer system of social care support for England

The King's Fund has published proposals for reforming access to adult social care, alongside new analysis of local variation. It finds that the share of people receiving publicly funded long-term care varies substantially, even between statistically similar councils. 59% of councils had access rates at least 20% above or below their nearest statistical neighbour, with variation of up to 101% for working-age adults and up to 60% for people over 65.

The King's Fund recommends an "equal access" national assessment, national rather than local funding, clearer individual entitlements, a more permissive approach to direct payments and a cap on lifetime care costs.

2.8 The Health Foundation. Preventing health-related job loss

This report by RAND Europe, commissioned by the Health Foundation, reviews the evidence on caseworker support to help people stay in work when health problems arise. More than 4 million working-age people in the UK work with a health condition that limits their ability to work, and around 300,000 people a year leave work and become economically inactive because of one.

Key findings include:

- Caseworker support can improve employment and health outcomes, and the economic benefits generally outweigh the costs.
- Early, work-focused and personalised support appears most effective.
- Access to caseworker support in the UK is fragmented and uneven, relying on short-term public programmes and private provision concentrated among larger employers.

The report concludes that scaling up support is possible but requires a more coherent national system, with sustainable funding, workforce development and professional standards.

2.9 The Health Foundation. Paying with our health: impacts of the cost-of-living crisis

This analysis examines how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting health and health inequalities. In 2024/25, food, housing, fuel and power accounted for 42% of spending among the lowest-income households, compared with 19% among the highest-income households. In 2025, 36% of households in the most deprived areas of England experienced low or very low food security, compared with 14% in the least deprived areas.

The Health Foundation calls for targeted support with energy costs this winter, extending the Breathing Space debt scheme and increasing the local housing allowance. In the longer term, it calls for improving the energy efficiency of homes through the Warm Homes Plan.

2.10 Local Government Association. Leading digital integration for better health and wellbeing


Leading digital integration for better health and wellbeing

This paper brings together evidence on digital and data integration in health, wellbeing and social care and identifies key opportunities for local authorities and central government to work in partnership to advance the digital ambitions set out in the NHS 10-Year Health Plan, alongside wider public sector digital reform.

Executive summary

This report, developed by PPL for the Local Government Association (LGA), reviews evidence on digital and data integration across health, wellbeing and social care. It finds that delivering the NHS 10 Year Health Plan's three shifts depends fundamentally on local government. However, current approaches remain fragmented and too focused on technology rather than outcomes. The costs of integration largely fall to local government, while many of the benefits are realised elsewhere in the system.

The report identifies data quality and data sharing as the central practical challenges, and neighbourhood health as the clearest use case for digital and data integration.

2.11 Department for Work and Pensions. PIP customers' experiences of the Award Review process

This research, carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), looks at how Personal Independence Payment (PIP) customers experience Award Reviews. It draws on a survey of 2,011 customers and 27 follow-up interviews. A third (33%) of customers were unaware of Award Reviews, and fewer than half (45%) understood why they take place.

Key findings include:

- Customers commonly reported stress (59%), worry (48%) and feeling overwhelmed (42%) during the process.
- Only 40% found the review form relevant to their circumstances, and 74% agreed a more tailored form would make the process easier.
- Of those who had an assessment, 69% needed additional support.
- 56% agreed DWP staff were professional, but only 36% agreed they were supportive.

The report recommends setting expectations at the point of award, explaining more clearly what each stage involves, and making forms and assessments more relevant to people's conditions. The findings will inform the redesign of Award Reviews through DWP's Health Transformation Programme.

2.12 Public Health Wales. Approaches to measuring and growing prevention spend and investment


International Health Insights:
Approaches to Measuring and Growing Prevention Spend and Investment

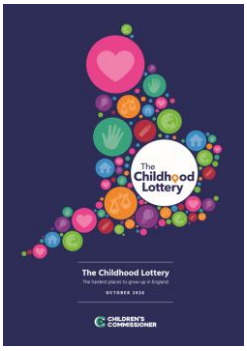
October 2026

This Public Health Wales report highlights the gap between the scale of preventable disease and the share of health spending directed towards prevention. Across OECD countries, just 3.4% of health expenditure was spent on preventive public health interventions in 2025. The report sets out approaches used internationally to shift funding towards prevention, including ring-fenced and cross-sector budgets, earmarked taxes,

outcome-based investment and longer-term budget planning. It also calls for a consistent way to measure prevention spending, including outside the health service.

3 Children and Young People's Services

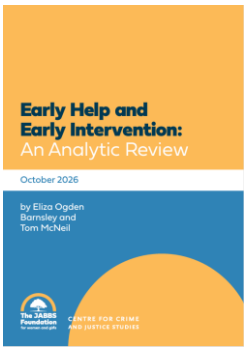
3.1 Children's Commissioner. The Childhood Lottery: the hardest places to grow up in England



The Children's Commissioner's new report brings together more than 160 measures to compare children's lives across local areas in England. It finds a "postcode lottery". For example, four local authorities spend nothing per teenager on youth services, while the highest-spending area spends £421. More than one million children had active referrals to children's mental health services in 2024-25, with median waits ranging from 6 days in one area to 118 days in another.

The Commissioner names the areas where it is hardest to grow up and warns of a "state of emergency" for children in some communities. She calls for a national Children's Emergency Fund, a "children's test" for strategic authorities and a Deputy Mayor for Children in every strategic authority.

3.2 Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. Early help and early intervention



This review, written by the JABBS Foundation for Women and Girls, screened more than 5,000 sources and analysed 68 studies in depth to identify what makes early help work. It sets out 18 characteristics of successful interventions, grouped into collaborative partnerships, user-focused approaches, valued staff and structural foundations.

Positive outcomes were found across six areas: wellbeing, educational attainment, mental health, child safeguarding, parenting and family, and wider systems change. Interventions that combined several characteristics were more likely to achieve outcomes in more than one area. The report ends with practical actions for funders, commissioners, frontline staff, policymakers and researchers.

3.3 Department of Health and Social Care. Children and young people's alcohol and drug services: framework

This national framework sets expectations for designing, commissioning and providing alcohol and drug support for children and young people in England. It covers children aged 17 and under, and young people aged 18 to 24 under transitional arrangements. It is aimed at directors of public health, commissioners and providers, as well as partners in education, safeguarding, policing, youth justice and mental health. It was developed with stakeholders, including young people with lived experience.

3.4 Department for Education. Understanding and preventing serious violence in education

The Department for Education has published guidance for schools and colleges on how pupils may become involved in violence or crime, including weapons, assault and criminal exploitation. It covers how to understand the risks, strengthen prevention, respond safely to incidents, support children afterwards and work with safeguarding partners. It brings existing guidance together and does not introduce new expectations.

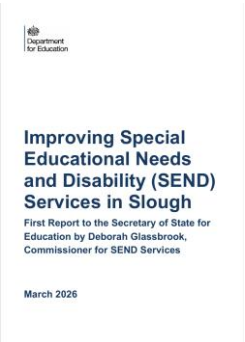
3.5 Department for Education. School belonging case studies research



This research by Ipsos UK and TONIC, commissioned by the Department for Education, explores how 16 mainstream schools with a strong focus on belonging create a sense of belonging among pupils. It identifies five dimensions of belonging: safety and security, inclusion, collective identity, individual recognition, and positive relationships. It also describes the conditions and practices that help schools embed them.

Schools saw belonging, attendance and attainment as reinforcing each other. A separate DfE survey found that 69% of secondary pupils felt they belonged at school most days or every day in May 2025, up from 57% a year earlier. The findings will inform DfE's Pupil Engagement Framework.

3.6 Department for Education. Slough Borough Council's SEND service: commissioner's report



The first report from the SEND Commissioner for Slough from March 2026 sets out why the council's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) service has "widespread and/or systemic failings". It points to weak leadership and governance, unreliable data and heavy reliance on agency and interim staff. In 2024, only 7.5% of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Slough were issued within 20 weeks, compared with 45.9% nationally. The commissioner recommends considering an alternative delivery model and keeping the statutory direction in place.

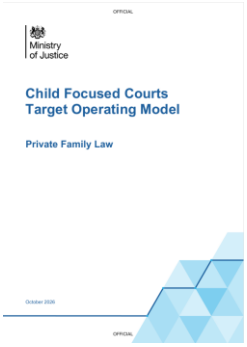
3.7 Barnardo's. Filling the gap? Young people's use of AI for mental health support



Barnardo's and the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society surveyed 2,000 children aged 11 to 17 across the UK. 43% had used a mental health app or chatbot for emotional support in the past year. Of those who had tried to access professional mental health support, only 27% said they received the help they needed. Children in lower-income households were more likely to report being on a waiting list.

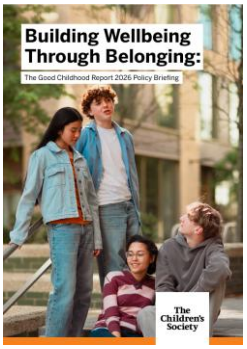
The report calls for regulation of AI mental health tools, age-appropriate standards for general-purpose AI, and investment in human mental health services. It says AI should only supplement human support.

3.8 Ministry of Justice and HM Courts & Tribunals Service. Child Focused Courts target operating model



This policy paper sets out a shared blueprint for reforming private family law proceedings through Child Focused Courts, previously known as the Private Law Pathfinder. It covers the model's vision, design, multi-agency approach and delivery requirements. The government has confirmed that Child Focused Courts will roll out across England and Wales by March 2029.

3.9 The Children's Society. Building wellbeing through belonging: the Good Childhood Report 2026



The Children's Society has published policy recommendations building on its Good Childhood Report 2026, which found a strong link between belonging and young people's wellbeing. Over one in five (21.7%) young people with low wellbeing did not have an adult to turn to, compared with 6.1% of those without low wellbeing.

The recommendations are organised around four areas: People, Places, Power and Pathways. They include a National Trusted Adults Framework, a review of the statutory duty for youth services, long-term funding certainty for youth services, an annual national measurement of children's wellbeing, and a national "Waiting Well" offer for young people waiting for mental health support.

3.10 Centre for Justice Innovation. Welsh national Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) and problem-solving workshops: learning and recommendations

The Welsh Government is exploring how problem-solving approaches in public law proceedings could help reduce the number of children in care in Wales. This briefing shares learning from three workshops with over 60 family justice professionals and community partners. Participants saw clear potential for a Family Drug and Alcohol Court approach to make court less adversarial, improve multi-agency working and reduce repeat care proceedings. They also raised concerns about funding, workforce capacity and regional variation. The briefing sets out 10 recommendations for next steps.

3.11 Department of Health and Social Care. Safeguarding children affected by a parent's alcohol or drug use

The Department of Health and Social Care has substantially updated its 2018 guidance for commissioners and providers of adult alcohol and drug treatment on safeguarding children affected by a parent's or carer's alcohol or drug use. The revised guidance reflects current policy and programmes, including the Families First Partnership programme and Working Together to Safeguard Children. It places more emphasis on workforce expectations and ways of working, the effects of stigma and trauma, and pregnancy and the perinatal period.

The guidance highlights that stigma, shame and fear of children being taken into care can be powerful barriers to accessing support, especially for mothers, and that services can overlook the role of fathers and male carers. It is aimed at alcohol and drug services, combating drug

and alcohol partnerships, local safeguarding children partnerships, directors of public health and directors of children's services. A new self-assessment checklist helps local partnerships review their policies and practice.

3.12 Department for Education. Breakfast club early adopters: final report



This final evaluation by Ipsos UK, with the Behavioural Insights Team and Northumbria University, explores the early adopter phase of the Department for Education's free breakfast clubs. It draws on a survey of 5,487 parents across 321 schools, observations in eight schools, and interviews and focus groups with 43 parents.

Key findings include:

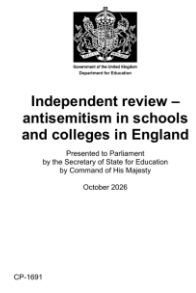
- 92% of parents were aware of their school's breakfast club, and 69% of these said their child attends.
- Enabling parents to work was the main reason for using the club (53%). Of parents using it, 80% said it helped them get to work on time and 52% reported spending less on childcare.
- 78% of parents of children with SEND said the club supported their child's needs.
- Among parents not using the club, 49% said their existing arrangements were adequate.

The report suggests keeping delivery flexible, providing quiet spaces for pupils with SEND, and communicating more clearly that clubs are free and open to all.

3.13 Ofsted. Children's social care questionnaires 2026: what children and young people told Ofsted

Ofsted's annual survey asks children living in children's homes, foster care, supported accommodation and residential schools about their experiences. In 2026, 8,360 children responded. Ofsted reports that almost all children feel safe where they live and are happy with their staff or carers. Around nine in ten said staff or carers listen to them always or most of the time, which is more than last year. Nearly four in five spend time with people who are important to them. Children in children's homes were more likely than others to report problems getting along with staff and other children. Ofsted uses the responses alongside other information to decide when and what to inspect.

3.14 Department for Education. Independent review into antisemitism in schools and colleges



Sir David Bell's independent review, commissioned by the Department for Education, examined antisemitism in schools and colleges in England. It drew on a call for evidence that generated 587 responses and 84 submissions, alongside a UCAS survey of over 5,000 applicants. The review finds that one in five young people reported witnessing or experiencing antisemitism, rising to almost three in five among Jewish respondents.

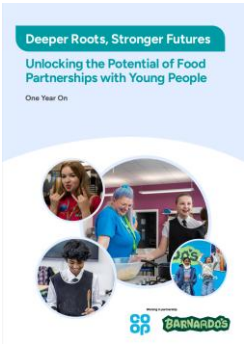
Reporting rates are low, and incidents are often dealt with through behaviour processes rather than as safeguarding concerns.

The review makes 27 recommendations. These include encouraging adoption of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, training for leaders and designated safeguarding leads, strengthening Keeping Children Safe in Education so that prejudice-based harm is recognised, clearer reporting and recording of incidents, and a dedicated support service for schools. The government has accepted all 27 recommendations.

3.15 Department for Education. High needs funding arrangements: 2027 to 2028

The Department for Education has published operational guidance for local authorities, schools and colleges on high needs funding for 2027 to 2028. It covers the process and timeline for changing the number of high needs places, how to complete the place change workbook, and guidance on the digital form for local authorities. It is accompanied by high needs pupil and place numbers from the spring 2026 school census.

3.16 Barnardo's. Deeper Roots, Stronger Futures: one year on



In this youth-led report, members of Barnardo's Youth Advisory Group, working with Co-op, visited and interviewed four Local Food Partnerships across the UK to see how they involve young people. They found that young people take part in cooking, food growing and community kitchens, but are less often involved in governance or leadership roles. Trusted links with schools and youth organisations are often key to reaching them. The report updates the group's "Ten Steps" guidance for involving young people in local food partnerships.

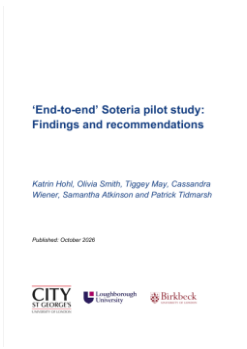
4 Criminal Justice

4.1 Ministry of Justice. Government response to the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts



The government has published its response to both parts of Lord Leveson's Independent Review of the Criminal Courts. Part 1, published in July 2025, set out options for reform to address pressures in the Crown Court. Part 2, published in February 2026, focused on efficiency, including the processes of partner agencies. The response sets out how the government intends to take forward the review's recommendations.

4.2 Ministry of Justice. 'End-to-end' Soteria pilot study report



This Ministry of Justice-funded study by researchers at ICPR (Birkbeck) and partners looks at how Operation Soteria has changed the handling of rape cases from report through to court. It finds that the operation has shifted police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) practice, and that the number of rape suspects charged is now the highest since records began.

However, the study identifies a "cliff edge" after charge in strategic focus, resourcing, training and oversight. Digital evidence is a key point of friction, including requests for victims' phone downloads. The central recommendation is to bring barristers and the judiciary into a whole-system approach to rape cases.

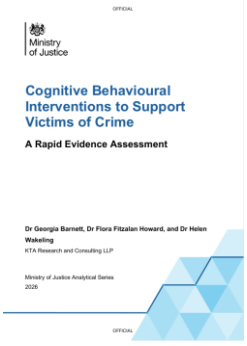
4.3 Youth Endowment Fund. Found but not followed: oversight of children vulnerable to violence below statutory thresholds



This report, commissioned by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) and delivered by the Centre for Safer Society, looks at how local areas keep track of children at risk of involvement in violence who fall below the thresholds for children's social care or youth justice. It draws on an evidence review, a national survey and case-study interviews.

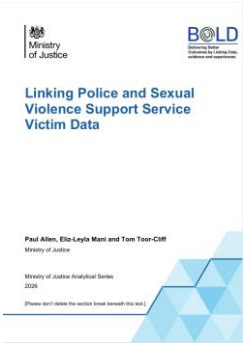
Only 9% of survey respondents said that roles and responsibilities for overseeing these children were very clear in their area. More than half said outcome data was not collected systematically, or did not know how it was collected. None of the fieldwork areas broke down oversight data by ethnicity. Stronger approaches had a named lead practitioner for each child, structured reviews (including after a case is closed), outcome monitoring and stable funding.

4.4 Ministry of Justice. Effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy and peer-led interventions for victims of crime



The Ministry of Justice commissioned Knowledge To Action Research and Consulting to carry out two rapid evidence assessments: one on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and one on peer-led support for victims of crime. They bring together evidence on effectiveness, delivery methods and costs, and on how these vary by victim characteristics. The outcomes considered include coping, resilience and recovery.

4.5 Ministry of Justice. Linking police and sexual violence support service victim data

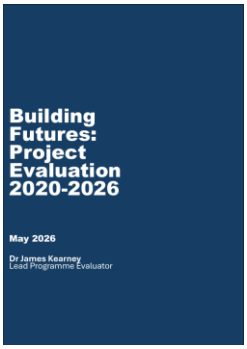


Carried out under the Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD) programme, this study links data from two rape crisis centres in the Synergy Essex Partnership with Essex Police data. It compares victims who reported to the police with those who did not, and tracks reporting victims' journeys through the criminal justice system.

4.6 Home Office. Wastewater analysis: estimating drug consumption, 2021 to 2026

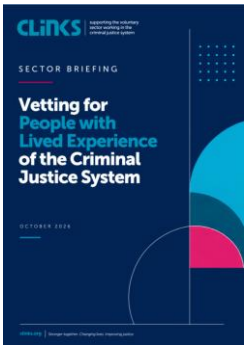
The latest findings from the Wastewater Analysis for Narcotics Detection (WAND) programme track the consumption of six key drugs across 16 sites in England since 2021. Cocaine was the most consumed drug. Estimated ketamine consumption fell by 11% between 2025 and 2026, after several years of growth. The latest phase also reports regional patterns and, for the first time, detects 18 additional drugs.

4.7 Prison Reform Trust. Building Futures: project evaluation 2020–2026



This independent evaluation of the Prison Reform Trust's Building Futures programme looks at its work with people serving long prison sentences. The programme's network grew to 969 members by the end of 2025, and it has produced 20 reports, with more due. Of the 20 working group members surveyed, 80% agreed or strongly agreed that the programme had made a real difference to their daily life. However, the evaluation highlights risks to sustainability after working groups were dissolved at four prisons.

4.8 Clinks. Vetting for people with lived experience of the criminal justice system: a sector briefing



This briefing explains HM Prison and Probation Service's Risk Assessed Access framework. The framework allows people with lived experience whose convictions would otherwise block standard vetting to work in prison and probation settings, subject to a role-specific risk assessment. Clinks highlights gaps in the framework, including the lack of an appeal route, no fixed timeframe for decisions, duplicate DBS checks and the retention of fixed exclusion categories.

4.9 HM Inspectorate of Probation and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. Electronic monitoring in practice

This joint thematic inspection examines how police forces respond to breaches of electronically monitored bail conditions, and how the Probation Service uses electronic monitoring for people on community sentences and post-release licences. Electronic monitoring is increasingly relied on as an alternative to custody, against a backdrop of prison overcrowding.

The inspection found dedicated staff responding to growing demand, but serious gaps in guidance, systems and information sharing. National guidance for police on bail breaches was limited and practice varied considerably, with alleged breaches not consistently leading to structured consideration of risk to victims and the public. In probation, monitoring data was often underused, and many weaknesses identified in a 2022 inspection remain. The inspectorates also found that HM Prison and Probation Service does not yet understand whether the use and outcomes of electronic monitoring differ across protected characteristics.

The report makes 30 recommendations to the National Police Chiefs' Council, chief constables, the Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service.

4.10 Home Office. Worker and employer perspectives of illegal working

This qualitative research by IFF Research, commissioned by the Home Office, explores illegal working among gig economy workers and businesses in sectors vulnerable to it. It finds that risk varies by sector and platform, and that informal networks of friends and family often helped people find illegal work. Construction, beauty and car washes were highlighted as particular areas of concern, and sub-contracting was seen as hiding who the ultimate employer is. Businesses tended to attribute non-compliance to error rather than intent.