CordisPulse

January 2023

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.

A number of reports featured in the month's Pulse focus on the increase in vulnerabilities of children, young people and families as a result of the pandemic, lockdowns, restricted school openings and reduction in public service provision.

Cordis Bright have published two reports recently that examine this and, in particular, the success of services to respond in this challenging environment. The two evaluations we have produced for Newham, both came out of an original evaluation of the Department for Education Social Innovation Fund project Newham NewDAy. The evaluations show and evidence promising interventions to support children and families impacted by, or at risk, of Domestic Abuse, Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation, and for Children on the Edge of Care.

You can find out more about these innovative projects and the evaluation findings in our Cordis Bright news section below.

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,

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Cordis Bright News

The Pulse Special for UK Disability History Month

A special edition of CordisPulse was produced to mark the 13th UK Disability History Month, and annual national awareness campaign that takes place from 16th of November to the 16th of December. The month aims to recognise the history of disabled people's activism, including both their struggles for equality and achievements in changing the human rights landscape for individuals with disabilities in the UK.

The UK Disability History Month disproportionality bulletin

In December, we also published the UK Disability Month disproportionality bulletin. This bulletin presents an overview of the findings from recent research into disproportionality for disabled people in some of the sectors Cordis Bright specialises i.e. health and social care, children's services, and criminal justice.

The longitudinal evaluation of Newham NewDAy

In 2020, we finalised an evaluation of the Newham NewDAy programme, a whole-family domestic abuse programme supported through the Department for Education's Children Social Care Innovation Programme. In 2022, we completed an update to the data study conducted as part of the original evaluation, expanding the time span for the data study and exploring changes up to 30 months post-exit from NewDAy, with the aim of assessing its impact on children and young people's social care outcomes (and associated costs) over a longer period of time. This report presents the findings from this longitudinal study. It found that NewDAy had a positive effect on how quickly the case status of children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse de-escalated, and was most effective in de-escalating cases long-term for young people at higher risk. However, over the longer-term the scale of de-escalation converged so that by 12 and 24 months after exit there were few differences between the NewDAy cohort and the comparison group. Findings from the cost-benefit analysis suggest that (a) the overall costs of operating NewDAy, i.e. a highly specialist and experienced team, essentially outweighs the costs that can be saved over time by de-escalating statutory cases; and (b) the NewDAy model makes a particularly positive difference to costs if it successfully prevents children from entering care (or helps to remove children from care). A greater focus on this cohort could result in more immediate and substantial savings to the system.

For more information, please contact Colin Horswell or Suzie Langdon-Shreeve.

The evaluation of Divert-Ed

We also published the findings from the evaluation of the London Borough of Newham's Divert-Ed! offer. The offer has been running since May 2020 and the evaluation was completed in October 2021.

The Divert-Ed! team is part of a wider Divert! team which works with children and young people at risk of child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE) and children on the 'edge of care'.

Practitioners working with the cohort recognised that their needs were wide-ranging. Research suggests that these needs can be complex and chronic, and that wellbeing, safeguarding and education needs are often interlinked.

Divert-Ed! was developed in response to this, offering education support to children and young people within Divert! and working with families, education professionals, and social care practitioners involved with the child's care and education. The Divert-Ed! offer has been adapted from the NewDAy Schools and Learning offer (please see our previous evaluation report of NewDAy for more information).

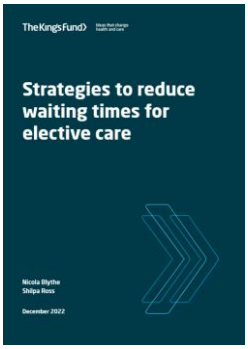
The evaluation highlighted the effectiveness of the Divert-Ed! referral and assessment process and the importance of trauma-informed, systemic and strength-based approaches, as well as a highly skilled team, in achieving positive outcomes for the cohort. The project has demonstrated that there are potential benefits to allocating specific skills and expertise in education and schools to safeguarding teams in social care. Preliminary outcomes identified for young people, families and professionals include improvements in children and young people's wellbeing and engagement with school, a reduced risk of exploitation for young people, improved relationships between parents/carers and professionals and children, improved understanding among parents/carers of young people's needs and their own roles and responsibilities in supporting engagement with education, and improved skills, confidence and awareness for professionals in relation to young people's educational needs.

For more information, please contact Colin Horswell or Suzie Langdon-Shreeve.

Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

The King's Fund. Strategies to reduce waiting times for elective care



In the face of record high waiting times for elective care, The King's Fund undertook research to understand the strategies that have been used to reduce waiting times in England and elsewhere in the past 20 years. The research highlighted not only hope but opportunities to reduce waiting times in the present day: by addressing shortages of health care staff and physical resources urgently; by working with integrated care systems in the spirit of prevention, collaboration, inclusion and community-based models of care; and by aligning a vision for the health services with a plan that brings staff, patients and the public along on the journey to get there.

Further information on the report can be found here, and a review of the evidence regarding specific actions in the main report and a full summary of the literature can be found on the PREPARE website.

Care Quality Commission. Monitoring the Mental Health Act

The CQC has published its annual report on the use of the Mental Health Act (MHA), in which it sets out CQC's activity and findings from its engagement with people subject to the MHA and review of services registered to assess, treat and care for people detained using the MHA during 2021/22. Key messages from the report include:

- Workforce issues and staff shortages mean that people are not getting the level or quality of care they have a right to expect, and the safety of patients and staff is being put at risk.
- Gaps in community mental health care are compounding the rising demand on inpatient services, with delays in admission, transfer and discharge.
- Urgent action is needed to tackle the over-representation of people from some ethnic minority groups and, in particular, the over-representation of Black people on community treatment orders.
- The quality of ward environments is an ongoing concern, with many inpatient environments in need of immediate update and repair.
- Despite the challenges facing services, CQC have seen examples of good practice around advance planning and applying the principles of least restriction.

Public Health Wales. New health outcomes data published

The Public Health Wales Outcomes Framework has published new health outcomes data. First published in March 2016, the purpose of the Public Health Outcomes Framework is to help understand the impact which individual behaviours, public services, programmes and policies are having on health and wellbeing in Wales.

Key findings include:

- The number of females aged between 19-24 years in education, employment and training steadily increased by around 10 per cent between 2011 and 2017 and has since remained stable.
- Suicides in Wales are three times higher for males than females, and twice as high in the most deprived areas, compared to the least.
- The gap between the least and most deprived areas in Wales, for premature deaths from non-communicable diseases, has been increasing in recent years, and is now almost two and half times greater in the most deprived areas, compared to the least.
- Deaths from road traffic injuries are three times more likely among males than females.
- Trends in emergency admissions for hip fractures suggest the rate has been falling over the last 12 years.
- Teenage conceptions continue to fall at a steady rate in Wales.

Public Health Wales. Innovation in digital health technologies hampered by inequities

In a paper co-authored by Public Health Wales and WHO/Europe, persistent differences in access to, use of and engagement with digital health technologies between communities and across Europe has been identified. The data shows there is currently lower reported use among those with poorer underlying health. The research highlights how patterns in access, use and levels of engagement with digital technology vary across populations, with consistent evidence of higher use of digital health technologies in urban areas and in individuals of white ethnic origin and English speakers compared to those form ethnic minorities and those with language barriers. Additionally, People with higher education levels and higher economic status used these technologies more, and younger persons tended to use them more than older adults. No clear evidence on inequalities in the engagement with digital health technologies was found despite these being likely to be variable between population groups.

The paper notes, that many healthcare providers are increasingly using digital health technologies (DTH) to enable patients and the public to manage their health and engage with healthcare systems. However, the paper also highlights how if known inequalities in access, use and engagement with digital technology are not considered and addressed, a focus on these technologies may inadvertently widen existing inequities in health.

The authors identified the following key areas for future work:

- A common framework to monitor engagement with digital technology for health across equity domains.

- Mapping inequities in digital infrastructure and addressing barriers to access digital health.
- Finding the most effective approaches to build digital skills for those most in need.
- Addressing usability for those with disabilities or language barriers.

Department of Health and Social Care. Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF): provider fee reporting, 2021 to 2022

At Spring Budget 2017, the government announced an additional £2 billion for adult social care.

The purpose of the grant was to:

- Meet adult social care needs.
- Reduce pressures on NHS, including supporting more people to be discharged from hospital when ready.
- Ensure that the local social care provider market is supported.

As a condition of the funding local authorities were required to report data on local authority fee rates for adult social care providers. Information has been collected from local authorities in 2021 to 2022 to find out whether the additional funding is having an impact in helping local care markets through fee uplifts. Findings included:

- Local authority feedback indicates that the Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) has enabled uplifts to average fee levels in 2021 to 2022.
- Over 85% of local authorities stated that they increased the average fees that they pay to external providers of home care, age 65 and over care homes without nursing, and age 65 and over care homes with nursing.
- On a weighted average basis, excluding whole-market support such as the Infection Control Fund, local authorities reported the following increases in fee rates when compared to 2020 to 2021:
  - home care – an increase of 3.5%
  - age 65 and over care homes without nursing – an increase of 5.3%
  - age 65 and over care homes with nursing – an increase of 6.2%

Local Government Association. The state of strategic relationships between councils and their local voluntary and community sector

The Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned Locality to conduct research into the state of strategic relationships between councils and their local voluntary and community sector (the “VCS”). Both the LGA and Locality are said to be ‘committed to ensuring local partnerships can be strong and successful in order to build more inclusive, resilient communities’.

A key aim of the research project is to uncover the range of benefits that are unlocked when councils and the VCS work well together.

The research has highlighted many common barriers that prevent councils and VCS from working strategically in partnership. Between both sides, these include:

- Low capacity.
- Reduced budgets and resources.
- A lack of clarity over priorities.
- Poor senior buy-in.
- A failure to plan together.
- Differences in structure and process.

To help overcome these barriers and maximise the benefits, two key outputs have been generated for councils and their VCS partners to use.

The first is a typology of strategic relationships, identifying the five key "types" of relationships that exist between councils and VCS organisations.

The second is a research output which includes a set of four principles, which 'provide the building blocks for successful relationships':

- Shared foundations: clarity of purpose, values, and roles, built on shared understanding, knowledge and a commitment to partnership working.
- Relational culture: behaviours and ways of working that enable the power of community to flourish, with both sides giving generously to the process and being open to receiving feedback.
- Effective structures: systems, mechanisms and processes that are fit for purpose and enable innovation and sustain long-term commitment.
- Capacity and resources: having the wherewithal to take action.

House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee. A "gloriously ordinary life": spotlight on adult social care

The House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee recognises that the Government has outlined a new vision for social care in its recent White Paper and they 'applaud its ambition'. However, they believe that it falls short of providing a concrete and fully resourced programme of change, which is necessary to realise these ambitions. The Committee believe that the recent funding announcements that were made in relation to adult social care have 'further lessened expectations that the White Paper will be realised in practice'.

In this report the House of Lords Adult Social Care Committee set out the core changes that they want to see happen in adult social care, so that 'it becomes a progressive, visible, fairer and kinder system'. Each of their recommendations constitutes a step towards enabling these changes. Fundamentally, they believe their recommendations are about 'building a more resilient, cost-effective, sustainable and modern service with greater efficiency as well as equality at its core'.

Tools and Guidance

NHS England. Discharge Challenge for Mental Health and Community Services providers

The National Health and Social Care Discharge Taskforce has asked that integrated care boards and providers of mental health and community inpatient services focus on ensuring that they have robust discharge processes in place, ensuring that patients who no longer need to be in an inpatient setting are discharged and cared for in more appropriate settings.

A set of key interventions have been co-developed with a range of system-wide experts to help drive improvements in flow and reduce delayed discharge for mental health and community providers (outlined in Appendix 1).

The National Health and Social Care Discharge Taskforce are asking all systems through this challenge and with its support, to focus their improvement resources on those initiatives that will drive the biggest improvements locally by the end of March 2023. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has recently made £500 million available to support adult social care and discharges from inpatient settings, and mental health and community services are both within scope of this funding. This money will be routed through Better Care Fund, and it will be used by local leaders for the patients in their area.

By the end of the challenge in March 2023, systems are expected to have:

- Infrastructure in place to focus on the ongoing implementation of the initiatives.
- More local accountability of community and mental health discharges at system/place level to ensure the same level of focus and importance is upheld and provide parity with acute discharges.
- A full understanding of the interventions and the support offer available from NHS England to assist with implementation.

The Taskforce want systems to be able to evidence demonstrable improvements in discharge related metrics, including:

- Avoidable length of stay.
- The proportion of beds occupied by someone Clinically Ready for Discharge.
- Improved flow and timely access to local beds for people who require inpatient admission.

The identified next steps to help drive implementation between now and the end of March 2023:

- Begin to discuss as a system the current application of the initiatives.
- Identify names of ICB, Local Authority and provider leads of the challenge.
- Governance and reporting mechanisms.

NHS England. Going further on our winter resilience plans: more detail on mental health actions

Following the system-wide letter that was released on the 18th of October, further detail on the priority actions that all systems need to take this winter to ensure the NHS can best support people with mental health needs has been published. Also, to support system-wide focus on reducing delayed discharges and avoid long length of stay in mental health inpatient settings, a mental health specific discharge challenge has now been launched.

Priority actions are listed below:

- Strengthen ambulance response to mental health need.
- Optimising flow through mental health inpatient settings.
- Raising profile of 24/7 urgent mental health helplines for all ages.
- Supporting children and young people with mental health need in acute/paediatric settings.

The following funding is made available to support urgent and emergency care mental health pressures in 2022/23:

- £10.8 million of additional funding which has been reprioritised across mental health budgets specifically to support winter pressures (already allocated to all integrated care systems).
- The use of Better Care Fund in 22/23 to support mental health discharge should be encouraged, including the additional £500 million adult social care discharge fund.
- Allocation of £150 million of capital funding to upgrade urgent and emergency mental health care pathways and are approving bids on a rapid basis to ensure as many facilities are in use as possible for winter 2022/23.

NHS England. Supporting people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping

NHS England published the *Emergency Department pathway, checklist and toolkit* in November, which can be found here. The Pathway, checklist and toolkit has been co-developed to enable emergency departments to best support patients experiencing

homelessness and rough sleeping, and to realise service improvements relating to re-attendance, admission/re-admission and length-of-stay. It is expected that the guidance is implemented as part of a holistic and person-centred approach to care.

In December, in addition to the Pathway, checklist and toolkit, NHS England has published an 'Example checklist' which aims to support clinicians to help a person to manage their own health and needs via self-care, GP, Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) and referral into secondary care services where appropriate. The checklist can be found here. The checklist is made available as an example and can be downloaded and modified as appropriate.

NHS England. Guidance on developing the joint forward plan

NHS England has published a guidance on developing the joint forward plan which supports integrated care boards (ICBs) and their partner NHS trusts and foundations trusts to develop their first 5-year joint forward plans (JFPs) with system partners. The National Health Service Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Care Act 2022) requires ICBs and their partner trusts (the ICBs partner NHS trusts and foundation trusts are named in its constitution) to prepare their JFP before the start of each financial year.

The guidance sets out a flexible framework for JFPs to build on existing system and place strategies and plans, in line with the principles of subsidiarity. It also states specific statutory requirements that plans must meet.

Action required:

- ICBs and their partner trusts have a duty to prepare a first JFP before the start of the financial year 2023/23 – i.e. by 1st of April. (However, for this first year, NHS England is to specify that the date for publishing and sharing the final plan with NHS England, their integrated care partnerships (ICPs) and Health and Well-being Boards, is the 30th of June 2023).

- The process for consulting on a draft of the plan, should be commenced with a view to producing a version by 31 March, but NHS England recognises that consultation on further iterations may continue after that date, prior to the plan being finalised in time for publication and sharing by 30 June.

Further information on JFP, including on the following can be found here:

- Principles describing the JFP's nature and function.

- Legislative requirements.

- Developing the joint forward plan.

Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, UK Health Security Agency. £1.97 million awarded to support women in the workplace

Sixteen organisations across England will receive share of £1.97 million from the government to support women experiencing reproductive health issues in the workplace.

- Funding follows successful applications to this year's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Health and Wellbeing Fund.

- Money will help women to remain in or return to the workplace through and following pregnancy, pregnancy loss or menopause, and delivers on commitments in the first ever Women's Health Strategy for England.

Over £1.97 million has been awarded to organisations across England to bolster innovative schemes that are improving the health of women in the workplace.

Launched in April 2018, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Health and Wellbeing Fund is a joint initiative run by the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and the UK Health Security Agency. A new round of the fund is launched every year and typically runs over 3 financial years.

The theme of the fund for 2022 to 2025 is women's reproductive wellbeing in the workplace. Linking in with the development of the new Women's Health Strategy, this fund aims to support organisations that can provide a holistic support offer to assist women experiencing reproductive health issues – for example, menopause, fertility problems, miscarriage and pregnancy loss, menstrual health, and gynaecological conditions – to remain in and return to the workplace.

Children and Young People's Services

Reports

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Children and young people's wellbeing and mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic

The NFER published a report presenting key findings from a review of the evidence about the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the country's response to it on the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people in the UK. While the report acknowledges the data is complex and it's 'not easy to disentangle specific pandemic effects', it has identified some tentative conclusions to be drawn from this review of selected studies.

These key findings:

- Secondary-aged girls and primary-aged boys appear to have been most vulnerable to declines in mental health during the pandemic. This is in the context of secondary-aged girls having poorer pre-pandemic mental health than boys.
- The evidence suggests that disadvantaged children and young people were not more negatively impacted than their non-disadvantaged peers but the pre-pandemic evidence is clear that disadvantage is associated with lower overall wellbeing and mental health.
- Children and young people with SEND had lower wellbeing and mental health before the pandemic and this persisted through the pandemic.
- There is some evidence to suggest that the restrictions in early 2021 may have had a more negative impact than the earlier restrictions (March-June 2020).
- There is some evidence that for some young people, particularly those with pre-existing poorer mental health, the first lockdown may have been associated with some improvement in their mental health and wellbeing.
- Primary-aged children appear to show greater fluctuations in their mental health and wellbeing.
- By the summer of 2021, there was some suggestion of an improvement in children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing relative to earlier in the year but it may take a period of time before the effects of Covid on children's and young people's mental health and wellbeing become fully evident.

This report complements an NFER report reviewing evidence of the impact of the pandemic on pupil attainment, which can be access here.

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Data for social mobility: improving the collection and availability of data across government

The Social Mobility Commission (SMC) contracted NFER to identify the current barriers to finding and using socio-economic data, to outline an ambition of what an improved data environment could look like and how it might benefit future policymaking.

Key Findings:

- Due to Universal Credit (UC) transitional arrangements, it is no longer possible to identify the length of time a pupil has been disadvantaged. The DfE should undertake a review to identify how best to collect this information.

- A national household-level data set based on administrative data would help to better understand socio-economic differences. The government should set up a central programme to work towards developing such a data set which can be used across government and beyond.

- Improved data could lead to the development of better measures of socio-economic disadvantage which can improve the targeting of support. The ONS, with SMC input, should lead a cross-government project to conduct research into developing improved social background measures.

- Some important socio-economic factors such as data about a person's occupation are rarely collected or maintained by any government administrative system. The government should implement current proposals to collect and – critically – share occupational data, as well as reviewing other gaps in administrative data.

Sutton Trust. Cost of Living and Education 2022

The Teacher Tapp has conducted a new polling for the Sutton Trust, to examine the issues that teachers are seeing their pupils face linked to living costs this autumn term. The findings of the report reveal 'clear signs that the cost of living is increasingly affecting young people's education in a range of areas'. Key Findings:

The cost-of-living crisis:

- Teachers have seen an increase in the number of their pupils facing several different serious issues this autumn term. In state schools, 74% of teachers have seen an increase in pupils unable to concentrate or tired in class, 67% have more students with behaviour issues, and 54% have seen an increase in those coming into school without adequate winter clothing like a coat. 38% of teachers reported an increase in children coming into school hungry, with 17% saying there was an increase in families asking to be referred to foodbanks.

- These issues are more common in schools with the most disadvantaged intakes, with 79% of teachers reporting an increase in pupils unable to concentrate vs 71% in state schools with the most affluent intakes. Teachers seeing an increase in students with behaviour issues was also more common in more deprived schools (72% vs 62%), as was seeing an increase in those without adequate winter clothing (65% vs 40%). Teachers in more deprived schools were also much more likely to report an increase in those coming into school hungry (56% vs 22%), and in families asking to be referred to a foodbank (27% vs 8%).

- Over half (52%) of senior leaders in state funded schools reported the number of children ineligible for free school meals unable to afford lunch had increased this autumn, with 11% saying there had been a large increase. The figure saying there had been an increase was higher in schools with the most deprived intakes, at 59%, compared to 44% in state schools with more affluent pupils and just 5% in private schools. State secondary school senior leaders were 14 percentage points more likely to report an increase (61%) compared to those working at primary schools (47%).

Impact of the crisis on learning:

- In state schools, 38% of teachers said a third or more of their class were living in families facing considerable financial pressures which they felt are impacting on the children's ability to succeed in school. In private schools, this figure was just 5%. By area, the proportion of teachers reporting at least a third of their class are struggling was highest in Yorkshire and the North East, and in the North West, both at 43%, compared to just 28% in the South West and 27% in the South East.

- In state schools, 67% of teachers thought the cost of living crisis and associated impact on pupils would increase the attainment gap at their school, with 18% saying there would be a substantial increase. This figure was 72% in the most deprived state schools, compared to 60% in those with better-off intakes.

Teachers and the cost of living:

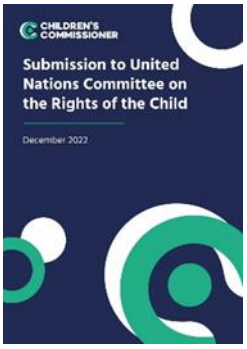
- Just under 1 in 10 (9%) of state school teachers say they are likely to leave the profession within the next year for reasons related to their pay, equivalent to 47,300 teachers. 2% say it is very likely that they will be leaving

Key recommendations suggested in the report:

- Access to free school meals should be expanded to fully capture those in need, by making them available to all families on Universal Credit.

- While it is welcome that benefits are now due to increase with inflation, this is currently not due to come into force until April. The polling in this report shows the need for more urgent financial support for families.

The Children's Commissioner. The Children's Commissioner's submission to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child



This report is from the Children's Commissioner for England to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's examination of the UK's combined Sixth and Seventh Periodic report under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Since taking up post in March 2021, the first priority for the Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, was to launch The Big Ask survey. The survey received more than 550,000 responses in total – equivalent to just under 6% of England's population of 4–17-year-olds. This makes it 'the largest ever survey of children'. The CCo reports how 'The Big Ask provides a unique insight into the experiences and priorities of children in England'. What was said in The Big Ask has 'shaped the Children's Commissioner's priorities and informs all the office's work, including this submission'. In this way, the CCo highlights how it has 'ensured that all the office's work is directly informed by the voices and perspectives of children'.

Briefings

NSPCC Learning. Summary of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel annual report 2021

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's third annual report shares key messages and learning from serious incidents, rapid reviews, local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews, thematic analysis and reports commissioned in England in 2021.

The briefing summarises findings from this report, including:

- Data about the incidents reported to the Panel.
- Learning for practice.
- Learning for the Panel and the review process.
- Learning on how multi agency safeguarding partner arrangements are working.

Education Policy Institute. Covid-19 and disadvantage gaps in England 2021

A report by the Education Policy Institute has been published, funded by the Nuffield foundation, examining the disadvantage gaps in England during 2021. The report highlights how the "disadvantage gap" – the gap in grades between disadvantaged students and their peers' - is a leading measure of social mobility in England and an indicator of the government's progress in reducing inequalities in education. The research, analysing official results data, shows that in 2021 the key stage 4 disadvantage gap between poor children and the rest increased by the largest annual amount since comparable statistics have been available over the last decade.

The report also noted an increase in the disadvantage gap in 2021, despite the use of teacher assessed grades, and contrasts with the situation in 2020, where there had been no increase in the key stage 4 disadvantage gap. The possibility of several reasoning for this is suggested in the report, including the possibility of the potential impacts of Covid-19 being felt more widely in 2021 than it had done in 2020, or that the 'different grading approaches identified more lost learning in 2021'.

Upon concluding the research, the following recommendations were made:

- Increased funding for disadvantaged students across both phases.
- Improve identification of disadvantaged students for schools, colleges and researchers.
- Further research to understand drivers of gaps for vulnerable groups.
- Create a cross-government child poverty strategy.

Tools and Guidance

Save the Children. How 2022 fell short for children – and what the UK can do in 2023

According to Save the Children, in 2023, to help support children at home and abroad, the UK government should:

- Put children at the centre of the British climate response and diplomacy.
- Accelerate emissions reduction at home and abroad.
- Increase UK funding to target the climate crisis and inequality across lower income countries.
- Shift power and unlock international finance.

Criminal Justice

Reports

HMICFRS. How the police respond to victims of sexual abuse when the victim is from an ethnic minority background and may be at risk of honour-based abuse

On 7 August 2020 HMICFRS received a super-complaint from the Tees Valley Inclusion Project (TVIP).

This super-complaint is about the police response to victims of sexual abuse from ethnic minority backgrounds who may be at risk of honour-based abuse.

In its super-complaint, TVIP says there are nine features of policing that are causing significant harm to these victims:

- Overuse of voluntary suspect interviews.
- Failure to consider honour-based abuse as a concomitant safeguarding concern following sexual abuse reporting.
- Failure to keep victims informed following the report of sexual abuse.
- Failure to provide information during the prosecution process.
- Failure to discuss special measures and other protective measures with victims/survivors.
- Lack of empathy from the police.
- Ineffective and inadequate use of police resources.
- Disproportionate focus on community impact.
- Failure to understand the retraumatising effect of the prosecution process.

HMICFRS, the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) have published a report in response to this super-complaint.

Following this investigation, recommendations have been made to the chief constables or equivalents, police and crime commissioners, and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

HMIP. The experiences of adult black male prisoners and black prison staff

HIMP conducted a thematic review which explores the experiences of prisoners who identify as black men and what can be done to create opportunities for respectful communication and mutual understanding between black prisoners and staff.

Key findings:

- Black prisoners described persistent race discrimination in their prison, while white staff felt there was very little or none.

- The notion of ‘playing the race card’ severely impeded relationships between staff and black prisoners.
- The discrimination incident reporting form (DIRF) system was not an effective means of addressing subtle racism.
- There was a strong theme of mutual mistrust and unease in relationships between white staff and black prisoners.
- Previous experiences in the criminal justice system and society affected black prisoners’ attitudes towards prison.
- Black identity converged strongly with Muslim identity and youth.
- There was a theme of resilience in black prisoners’ accounts, but many of them were also reluctant to report psychological distress or mental health problems because of a lack of trust in staff and cultural stigma.
- Genuineness and professionalism cut across ethnic barriers and were the most valued staff characteristics.
- Force was used against black prisoners far more frequently than against other groups. Racist stereotyping and weaker relationships between black prisoners and staff were contributory factors.
- Black prisoners’ risk was sometimes assumed rather than known, especially in relation to gang membership.
- Black prisoners had developed various coping strategies in response to their treatment in prison.
- Black staff made a positive difference to black prisoners.
- Black staff had to navigate complex and challenging relationship dynamics with black prisoners.
- Many black staff described experiencing high levels of stress at work and discrimination that hindered their career progression.
- Procedural approaches to address racism were important but of limited value without a commitment to building better relationships.

The following suggestions were made in the review to help promote positive change:

- Black prisoners wanted professional and accountable staff.
- Black prisoners, managers and many staff of all ethnicities were keen to find spaces for safe expression and communication.

More details to the above 'key findings' can be found in the full report.

Revolving Doors Agency. Identifying, understanding, and responding to the multiple complex needs of court service users

This research was commissioned by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to understand how people with multiple and unmet needs, such as homelessness, mental ill health, problematic substance misuse and criminal justice system experience, can be better supported to navigate courts and tribunals. The research focused on the HMCTS contact centre for help or support and interviewed 21 service users and 15 call agents working within the HMCTS contact centre.

It details how service users who identified as vulnerable lacked sufficient support and information to navigate complex court processes, and the barriers they faced to seek help from the HMCTS contact centre. The report also highlights a number of strengths that staff can draw on in their provision of guidance and signposting, and makes several recommendations to support service users with unmet health and social needs better engage with the contact centre including:

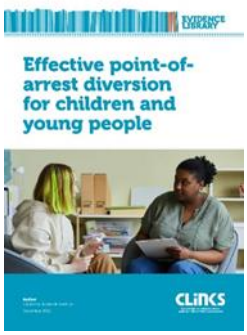
- Using a different approach to questioning.
- Offering a call back service for those who were emotional, stressed or aggressive on a call.
- Creating a specialist team that better understands the complex needs of service users.

Briefings

Clinks. Effective point-of-arrest diversion for children and young people

In this article Clinks identifies how some children come into contact with the law and 'most are simply doing what comes naturally to them – pushing boundaries, making choices without thinking through the consequences, acting up among their peers'.

The consequences of being caught, arrested and convicted can be serious. For these children this affects future education and employment opportunities, and it can have a backfire effect, making children and young people more, not less, likely to reoffend.



The evidence shows that point-of-arrest youth diversion is a better way of addressing low-level criminal behaviour. Moreover, in line with the Youth Justice Board's 'Child First' strategy, point-of-arrest youth diversion is vital to the prioritisation of the child's needs, enabling a fairer youth justice system.

This review provides:

- A summary of the evidence on the harms caused by 'formal criminal justice system involvement for children and young people'.
- A definition of what point-of-arrest youth diversion for children and young people is.
- An overview of the evidence base for point-of-arrest youth diversion.
- Good practice principles for point-of-arrest youth diversion.
- An overview of the latest research on point-of-arrest youth diversion and minoritised children and young people.
- A summary of current practice and policy on point-of-arrest youth diversion.

Clinks. Clinks response: The Justice Committee inquiry on the role of adult custodial remand in the criminal justice system

Clinks submitted evidence to the Justice Committee's inquiry on the role of adult custodial remand in the criminal justice system. This response is informed by consultation with the voluntary sector working in criminal justice in England and Wales as well as its experience of supporting the voluntary sector working in prisons and the community and those delivering resettlement support.

Access to both statutory and voluntary services in prison are usually driven by release date, which neither untried nor unsentenced prisoners have. As a result, Clinks highlights how this means remand prisoners may be included as a matter of policy but are largely excluded in practice. On release, there is 'no support for prisoners who are unconvicted'. Those who are convicted may be able to access support depending on the type and length of sentence handed down. As a result, HMPPS are considering how best to ensure services are available to those on remand.

In this response, Clinks makes four key recommendations:

- The Ministry of Justice publish a comprehensive needs assessment of people in prison, including but not limited to those on remand.

- The Committee explore the reasons for differences in custodial remand for those with protected characteristics, in particular women and racially minoritised people.

- The Ministry of Justice consider the learning from reviews of disproportionality and the use of custodial remand in the children and young people's estate is incorporated into work to address these issues for the adult population.

- The Ministry of Justice consider how the commissioning of services directed towards the policy priority of reducing reoffending might unintentionally preclude support for those on remand.