



CordisPulse

March 2020

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. children and young people's services, criminal justice, and adult social care and health.

As the situation escalates in the UK and internationally in relation to Covid-19 it is likely that the emphasis on research and policy in children's services, adult social care, criminal justice and health will shift considerably. We plan to continue to analyse the material that emerges with the aim of keeping you fully up-to-date with developments. The Cordis Bright team is set-up for remote working and are available on email and mobiles for any queries or advice. Please visit the 'Who we are' page on our website for further details.

Looking back over the previous month – when Covid-19 had a very low profile in relation to sector-specific research or policy – one of the common themes that emerges from the material relates to parental conflict. The EIF has contributed to the growing evidence base on this issue in their report about its impacts on schools..

It may be helpful to read this in light of the EIF's other new report which explore adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The report is a welcome addition to the growing evidence-base concerning ACEs in sectors from children's services to homelessness. It argues that while ACEs are clearly pertinent, the discussion risks oversimplifying the issue at times, and there is a need to continue to build nuanced understanding. We have recently delivered a number of projects that have explored the impact of ACEs and their use in service delivery and outcomes improvement for young people and adults. The findings in the EIF report align well with our experience.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this month's Pulse please do contact us on 020 7330 9170.

Best wishes,



Dr Stephen Boxford

Head of Research

If you would prefer not to receive future editions of the CordisPulse, please click 'unsubscribe' at the very end of this email. If you would like to discuss anything that arises from the Pulse (or if there are others who you think would like to receive copies) then please contact Dr Stephen Boxford on stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk or 020 7330 9170.

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

Telephone: 020 7330 9170

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

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



Cordis Bright News

Blackpool Fulfilling Lives. 'System Change – 2 Years On' Event

We attended an event which reflected on the progress that has been made with systems change through [Blackpool Fulfilling Lives](#) (BFL), for which we have been an [evaluation](#) partner since 2016. It was inspiring to see how much progress has been made in terms of buy-in to conversations about systems change since five years ago. This was reflected by the strong representation from relevant sectors and organisations on the day. Probation, the police, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), homelessness, public health and the National Expert Citizen's Group all gave talks about what they've done to make their organisations and services better for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

It was also encouraging to get a real sense that people are committed to doing things differently and listening to people with lived experience. For example, talks were given by both the BFL Lived Experience Team and Streetlife's Young Person's Lived Experience Team.

Adult Social Care and Health

Reports

The Institute for Health Equity. Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On

This report marks 10 years since the landmark study 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (The Marmot Review), which showed striking differences in health between people living in the wealthiest and most deprived communities. It finds that the last decade has been marked by deteriorating health and widening inequalities, arguing these have been largely unnecessary.



Headline findings are that: people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health; improvements in life expectancy have stalled, and even declined for the poorest 10% of women; and the health gap has grown between wealthy and deprived areas. Place plays a significant role – living in a deprived area of the North East is worse for your health than living in a similarly deprived area in London, to the extent that life expectancy is nearly five years less.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. UK Poverty 2019/20

The latest annual report on poverty from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation maps out the picture of poverty in the UK today. As with the '[Health Equity in England](#)' report (see above), place plays a key role – it affects people's access to a job with reliable and sufficient hours. Also important is being able to afford to pay housing costs, and the knowledge that you can rely on the social security system to help when threatened with poverty.



In response, four key target areas are put forward: increasing the proportion of people in 'good' jobs; improving earnings for low-income working families; strengthening the benefits system; and increasing the amount of low-cost housing available for families on low incomes.

Given these findings, readers may also be interested in exploring [new research](#) by the LGA highlighting problematic impacts of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) freeze. It shows that, for 9 out of 10 private renters across 279 local areas across the country, the LHA is lower than their rent.

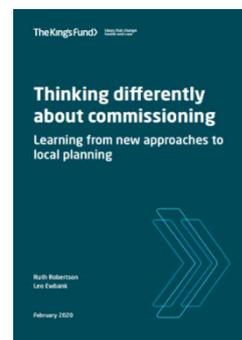
Citizens Advice. On the receiving end: How post can enable domestic abuse

A new report from Citizens Advice examines the role of post in domestic abuse. It found that half of survivors have had their post intercepted (which means the perpetrator takes the post addressed to the survivor and does any of the following: hides it, opens it, reads it, stops the survivor accessing it or destroys it), leading to a range of consequences, including financial, practical, safety, and wellbeing impacts.

They call for government action in response, in the form of an 'Address and Collect' service at post offices and investigations into the data breaches highlighted by the report.

The King's Fund. Thinking differently about commissioning: Learning from new approaches to local planning

NHS England policy has focussed in recent years on promoting collaboration as a key tool for improving health services. Here, the King's Fund look at what the implications are for commissioning. They visited clinical commissioning groups in three different parts of England where leaders are rethinking the role of commissioning and implementing more collaborative ways of planning services.



They found that the approaches they observed were associated with opportunities and argue that collaborative models of planning will be key in the future and should be supported. This is especially true at place level, i.e. footprints that are often approximately co-terminous with local authorities. These ways of working have implications for the development of Integrated Care Systems and wider ways of working regionally and among NHS national bodies.

National Institute for Health Research. Evaluation of the Integrated Personal Commissioning (IPC) Programme

This is the final evaluation report of the IPC Programme, funded by the National Institute for Health Research. IPC is an approach to joining up health and social care services, intended to help service users combine and direct the resources available to them and control their care. It was tested in 17 areas in England for service users with complex needs. The findings are tentative, as the evaluation faced challenges with collecting outcome measures and cost data due to low numbers and response levels.

However, the report draws out some key learning points including the importance of leadership structures and strong relationships to systems change, and the challenges associated with implementing the programme. The impacts themselves were mixed. The IPC was slightly costlier than standard operating, and the experiences of service users and carers were wide-ranging. Interestingly they reported varied levels of interest in exercising choice over their care and its resourcing. Service users' ability to do this was often reliant on them being pro-active and pushing hard within the system.

Whilst there was no statistically significant improvement in health outcomes, social care related wellbeing outcomes did improve – something which reportedly had not been found to be true of Personal Health Budgets.

Care Quality Commission. Monitoring the Mental Health Act in 2018/19

The Care Quality Commission (CQC)'s annual report on the use of the Mental Health Act (MHA) looks at how carers are providing for patients, and whether patients' rights are being protected. It highlights the importance of seeking patients' views and continuously reviewing impact.

It found a range of issues, mainly: people who are in long-term segregation can experience more restrictions than necessary and may experience delays in receiving independent reviews, especially people with a learning disability and autistic people; people do not always get the care and treatment they need; some services struggle to offer appropriate options, both in the community and in hospital; and it is difficult for patients, families, professionals and carers to navigate the complex laws around mental health and mental capacity.

Care Quality Commission. Providing sexual safety through empowerment: A review of sexual safety and the support of people's sexuality in adult social care

Here, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) make recommendations for providers and leaders in adult social care, as well as themselves as the regulator, about how sex is addressed within adult social care. These are based on findings that a lack of awareness of good practice in sexual safety and sexuality can place people at risk of harm. They argue for the need to develop a culture where people and staff feel empowered to talk about sexuality and raise concerns around safety.



St Mungo's. Local authority spending on homelessness: 2020 update

This analysis of local authority spending data is framed by a recognition that local authorities are often required to do more with less, facing significant increases in statutory duties and often very significant reductions in funding. The picture it presents is mixed, but the bottom line is the crucial need for local authorities to be equipped with the funding they require. It finds that short timeframes between the confirmation of funding and deadlines for spending are contributing to difficulty with delivering sustainable and effective work to reduce and prevent homelessness. However, it is encouraging that expenditure has in fact increased in the most recent two years of data. One lever has been the Government's pledge to end rough sleeping by next parliament, and the Homelessness Reduction Act has also helped to usher in a needed cultural shift in the assistance provided by local authorities.

[Recent analysis](#) from Shelter provides useful context to these findings: they determined that the move to nightly paid temporary accommodation for homeless people, a costly option, has increased by 121% in the past five years, with the majority (82%) of this type of accommodation procured by London boroughs, where homelessness is highest.

St Mungo's. Knocked Back: failing to support people sleeping rough with drug and alcohol problems is costing lives

'Knocked Back', a new report by St Mungo's adds further evidence to the understanding that support for rough sleepers with drug and alcohol problems is a key issue. This research finds that 12,000 people sleeping rough, or at risk of doing so, missed out on life-saving drug and alcohol treatment in 2018/19, and explores the challenges faced in accessing housing and support for individuals experiencing these issues.

Briefings

NHS Staff Survey 2019. National results briefing

There were mixed findings from the annual staff survey conducted by the NHS. It was encouraging to see that 38.0% of staff were satisfied with their level of pay (increased from 36.3% in 2018) - the highest result over the past five years - and that there have been improvements in the number of staff recommending their organisation as a place to work. However, it was concerning to find that an increasing number of staff report illness as a result of work-related stress, and almost one fifth report that they have experienced bullying and harassment from colleagues, with BAME and disabled staff members worst affected.



The Health Foundation. What the quality of work means for our health

New research by the Health Foundation seeks to shift away from the traditional focus on indicators of job insecurity such as unemployment, self-employment or zero-hours contracts and explore workers' perceptions of job quality and the implications for their health. It finds that occupation shapes our health directly, and underpins other factors that matter for health such as our income or social networks, with people in low-quality jobs more likely to have poor health and twice as likely to report that their health is not good (15% compared to 7%).

One in three (36%) UK employees report having a low-quality job (defined as a job which has two or more perceived negative aspects such as low levels of autonomy, wellbeing, security and/or satisfaction, as well as low pay), with some regions and population groups disproportionately affected by low-quality work.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019

Here, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) tentatively explore the link between rough sleeping figures and the work of the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)

Findings from the snapshot count of rough sleeping in autumn 2019 found that the number of people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night has fallen for the second year in a row, from a peak in 2017, but remains higher than in 2010 when snapshots began. In the 83 local authorities which have been receiving funding since 2018 as part of the RSI, the estimate was down by 294 people or 11% from last year and down by 942 people or 28% from 2017. In comparison, in areas that are not part of the RSI rough sleeping was estimated to have increased.

NHS England. Population Health Management: Understanding how integrated care systems are using population health management to improve health and wellbeing

This short document details four case studies of how integrated care systems are using population health management (PHM) to improve health and wellbeing. PHM as an approach focuses on understanding people's health and care needs and how they are likely to change in the future.

Case studies from Blackpool, Leeds, Bournemouth, and Berkshire West show PHM being used to target a range of physical and mental health and care needs. Key ingredients to the success of PHM are highlighted, including: joined up working; shared information and goals; and collective resources across a range of bodies, communities, and local people.

Tools and Guidance

The King's Fund. The updated GP contract explained

This short guidance from the King's Fund lays out recent changes to the GP contract framework and concludes that the update signifies a clear intention to stabilise general

practice so that it is able to deliver both improved access and offer an extended range of services.

It states that new contract has been widely welcomed and represents a welcome step change in recognising and addressing the capacity crisis in general practice. It brings in around £1.4 billion of additional new money into general practice compared to the original contract framework and resets the immediate demands on PCNs. It also represents money being set aside to support the expectations from the government around improving access. However, challenges remain around workload, retention, and training new staff.

Local Government Association. Nudges for social good: practical tips and learning from the LGA's behavioural insights programme

As behavioural insights continue to be applied to increasingly complex issues in local government, the LGA is looking to build an evidence base of what works that councils can apply to their own services locally. This summary of ten tips from the LGA's behavioural insights programme centres on how councils can reduce their financial risk and encourage innovation in the face of failing resources and increasing demand.

Public Health Wales. Three Horizons Toolkit

The Three Horizons Toolkit has been developed by Public Health Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner's Office to help public bodies avoid making decisions that don't stand the test of time. It is intended to be an easy-to-use guide and will help public bodies to think and plan better for the long-term, by keeping a clear vision and taking future trends into account.



Children and young people's services

Reports

Early Intervention Foundation. Adverse Childhood Experiences: What we know, what we don't know, and what should happen next

This major report surveys the evidence relating to the prevalence, impact and treatment of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), a set of 10 experiences or events associated with poor outcomes later in life. It considers the extent to which ACEs should provide the basis for frontline practice and service design, and the known level of effectiveness and value of ACE-related approaches, such as routine enquiry and trauma-informed care.



The headline messages are clear: while the ACEs narrative has provided a welcome spotlight on the impact of childhood adversity, and a useful way of talking about the issues, there is a need to guard against oversimplifying the challenges associated with childhood trauma, and work to put in place a comprehensive public health approach, based on the evidence of what works.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Care Quality Commission, and Ofsted. The multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment: Prevention, identification, protection and support

Here we see a multi-agency view on the issue of child sexual abuse in the family environment. This report summarises findings from joint targeted area inspections focussed on the extent to which children's social care, health professionals, youth offending services, the police and probation officers effectively work together to safeguard children who are subject to or at risk of this abuse.

It finds that professionals must give sexual abuse a higher priority in local areas through improved training and awareness-raising of the problem. More needs to be done to prevent the sexual abuse of children in the family environment and when it does happen, agencies must work better to protect and support victims and families. For example, practice in this area may be too police-led and too often there is no involvement from health agencies.

Welsh Government and Government Social Research. Holiday Hunger Playworks Pilot 2019 Evaluation

It is encouraging to read this evaluation of a pilot to tackle holiday hunger amongst children in Wales, which found a range of benefits for children and parents around nutrition, hunger, and cost. The evaluators conclude that funding the addition, extension or improvement of food at existing playwork provision to children at risk of holiday hunger appears to be a cost-effective approach to tackling holiday hunger. The scheme was allocated funding for 2020-21.



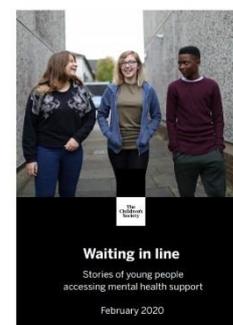
Cardiff University and What Works for Children’s Social Care. Impact of shared decision-making family meetings on children’s out-of-home care, family empowerment and satisfaction

The evidence to suggest family group conferencing (FGC) is effective is “inconclusive”, according to this systematic review. It concluded there was little proof to date that the meetings – which unlike traditional child protection conferences involve families in decision-making – make participants feel more empowered or help prevent children entering care.

The study acknowledged that the inclusive principles of the FGC model are “inherently a good thing”. But it said the lack of evidence as to their benefits should provoke debate as to how local authorities can best involve children and their families in decisions about their lives. Previous research findings relating to FGC and similar practices tended to be variable and of poor quality. One reason for this may be to do with the delivery of FGC being inconsistent from setting to setting.

The Children’s Society. Waiting in line: Stories of young people accessing mental health support

Based on interviews with young people, this report finds that there are real challenges faced by young people in accessing NHS mental health support. It cites national statistics which suggest that no area in England is treating as many children as estimated as needing help.



The authors argue that services need to be accessible, flexible and centred on choice. They suggest that support should move beyond schools and the NHS and be relocated into communities where young people live and grow up.

It may be useful to read the report alongside [new research](#) from the Local Government Association, which explores the factors contributing to the national context of shortcomings in access to mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people. The research looks to developing an evidence base for how local government and partners can work more effectively together to deliver a joined-up offer.

University of East Anglia Centre for Research on Children and Families. Returning children home from care: What can be learned from local authority data?

Researchers from the University of East Anglia wanted to find out what factors are associated with “stable reunification” with parents for children who have been in care, which they define as not re-entering the care system for at least two years. Based on 2,208 looked-after children from one large local authority in the UK who entered care between 2009 and 2015, they found that the likelihood of returning home varied by age and reason for going into care.

Stable reunification was more likely amongst younger children, children from less deprived homes, children who had spent less time in care and children who had experienced fewer care placements. It is suggested that, as a result, practitioners should be wary of pressure to keep children in care for as short a time as possible.



Department for Education. Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Impact Study on Early Education Use and Child Outcomes up to age five years

A research report from an ongoing study using longitudinal data explores the effect of early education in children's outcomes, the quality of provision, and the value for money of providing funded early years education. One key finding is that the home environment appears to have more wide-ranging impacts than the impacts of early care and education, indicating the substantial influence on development of a range of aspects of the home and parenting.

Additionally, informal early care and education (such as with friends, relatives, etc.) is associated with more positive outcomes during year one of school than formal early care and education. Starting age also emerged as a key factor.



Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): Impact Study on Early Education Use and Child Outcomes up to age five years
Research report
February 2020
Edward Melhuus – University of Oxford, and Nord University, Norway
Julian Gardiner – University of Oxford



National Centre for Social Research. Understanding the Early Years Workforce. Qualitative research findings

A new report from the National Centre for Social Research investigates the barriers and incentives in recruitment, retention and development within the early years workforce. Based on detailed interviews with nursery staff, managers and childminders, the report highlights three areas for policy focus going forward: improving pathways for retention and progression of early years staff; professionalising the early years workforce; and enhancing the status of the early years sector.



Understanding the Early Years Workforce
Qualitative research findings

Authors: Susan Bray, Billy Meier, Fiona O'Sullivan, Tom Straker, Felicia Hester
Date: 11/02/2020
Prepared for: The National Foundation

Department for Education. Evaluation of the Peer Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing Pilots

A series of pilots which tested peer support for mental health and wellbeing in schools, colleges, and children and young people's community organisations between October 2017 and July 2019 have been evaluated.

Evaluators found that whilst there are often concerns about safeguarding in the delivery of peer support, it is not necessarily an issue in practice. However, the capacity to provide suitable supervision is a must. The research also sketches out some key training requirements for peer mentors, including within targeted settings such as special schools.

Outcomes themselves were mixed – students self-reported very positive outcomes, but this was not backed up by psychometric measures. In conclusion, it is suggested that a longer timeframe and more reliable capacity may be needed to make more concrete statements about the value of this type of support.



Evaluation of the Peer Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing Pilots

Research report
February 2020

Laurie Day, Diarmid Campbell-Jack and Erica Bertolotto – Ecorys UK

Briefings

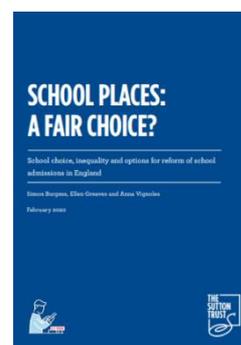
Early Intervention Foundation. Why reducing the impact of parental conflict matters for schools

Here, the Early Intervention Foundation draw out links between harmful levels of parental conflict, and disruption in the classroom, increased pressures and costs, and poorer academic results. They set out opportunities to intervene for teachers and teaching assistants, head teachers, school leaders and governor, staff in welfare roles, and specialist support staff. In addition, three case studies from across the country are spotlighted, showing the relative merits of some different approaches.

The Sutton Trust. School Places: A Fair Choice?

Here, it is argued that the socio-economic divide in access to the 'best' schools has significant consequences. Contrary to popular opinion, the authors suggest that parents across the socio-economic spectrum proactively engage in school choice, and that school allocation systems, not parental preferences, are the source of socio-economic gaps.

It may be interesting to read this alongside another report published by the Sutton Trust in February: '[Fairer School Admissions](#)', which explores the enduring policy challenges with reducing social segregation in state schools, despite the strong desire to do so.



Ofsted. Making the Cut: how schools respond when they are under financial pressure

This report looks at survey and interview data collected by Ofsted to explore the impact of difficult decision-making in response to financial pressure on schools. Interestingly, the authors conclude that there may be some worth in Ofsted starting to look at financial indicators during inspections in future.

The report finds that decision-making is often, but not always, based on evidence. The types of changes made and their impacts vary across schools, but some key areas in which changes were made were: reducing spend on staff; changing SEND provision; reducing curriculum breadth and extra-curriculum activities; reducing spend on school facilities and resources; and generating additional income.

Department for Education. Use of unregulated and unregistered provision for children in care

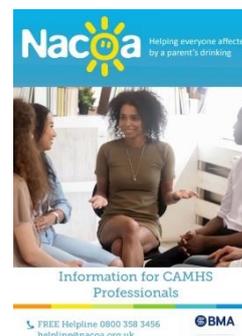
The Department for Education have researched the issues around unregulated and unregistered provision for looked-after children (LAC), with some interesting findings. Firstly, the use of this type of provision has increased in recent years, however the reason for this has not been fully understood. Moreover, concerns have been raised about the quality of the care, support and safeguarding offered by some of the providers and the decisions being made by local authorities in placing children in these settings.

Tools and Guidance



British Medical Association. Information for CAMHS professionals: Helping everyone affected by a parent's drinking

This booklet is aimed at CAMHS professionals working with children of alcohol-dependent parents. It outlines why it is important to understand what the mental health needs of the child might be, why the needs are there, and why they might be different to someone who is not the child of an alcohol-dependent parent.



Criminal Justice

Reports

Home Office. Independent review of drugs by Professor Dame Carol Black: Phase one report

This is part one of a two-phase review of drugs, commissioned in February 2019 by then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid. Part one is an up-to-date analysis of the issues, whilst part two will focus on recommended policy solutions. Here, the market is used as an idea to frame the issue of illegal drugs in the UK plus its scale, form, and impacts. The market is large in scale, and a peak has been reached in drug-related deaths and harm for vulnerable population.

It highlights how deaths from heroin and crack cocaine are closely associated with poverty and deprivation, and the selling of these drugs has been overtaken by the county lines model. The review also describes the limited success of government attempts to tackle illegal drug markets so far, and the negative impact of a prolonged shortage of funding on the treatment sector. A range of actions in response to the issues [have been announced](#) as part of a cross-governmental response.

Nuffield Trust. Locked out? Prisoners' use of hospital care

This study provides an in-depth look to date at how prisoners' health needs are being met in hospital. It argues that, whilst it is widely known that prisons in England are crowded and facing severe difficulties, the health and health care use of the prisoners within has received little attention. It draws on over 110,000 patient hospital records for prisoners at 112 prisons, examining a range of types of care and demographic groups.



Prisoners use hospital services far less and miss more hospital appointments than the general population. They also have particular health needs related to violence, drug use and self-harm. Furthermore, hospital data reveals potential lapses of care within prisons for certain groups of prisoners. In response, it argues for improving prisoners' access to hospital care and making better use of hospital data.

It may be of interest to listen to a new [podcast](#) from the Kings' Fund exploring health in prisons, focussing on whether living in prison leads to worse health and how prisons could offer an opportunity to address serious health inequalities.

National Audit Office. Improving the prison estate

This report examines how Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has handled changes it announced in 2015, in response to worsening living conditions for prisoners and unsustainable prison accommodation. It opted to contract out facilities management, create 10,000 new-for-old prison places and change its estate to better meet the needs of prisoners.

It finds that HMPPS has not been able to provide enough prison places, in the right type of prisons, and at the right time, to meet demand. One key issue is that the prison estate continues to represent poor value for money.

However, the authors are optimistic that that HMPPS is taking steps to improve, and now better understands the significant gap between its ambitions and the available resources. Ultimately, they call for a long-term deliverable strategy between HMPPS and the Ministry of Justice and HM Treasury in order to deliver value for money.

Criminal Justice Joint Inspection. A joint thematic inspection of Integrated Offender Management



Reflecting on changes since its previous inspection of Integrated Offender Management (IOM) in 2014, the authors of this report comment that there has been scant development of IOM in the past five years.

They argue that the broadening of the scope of many schemes to cover high risk of harm as well as prolific offender cases has reduced the clarity of focus and has not been accompanied by the necessary upskilling of staff to deal with the different challenges presented by this type of offender. For example, only two of the forty-four probation staff who were interviewed had received any specific IOM training, and no formal training was provided to police IOM staff.

Despite concerns, the authors are positive about the enduring potential of this approach and it is hoped that the expected changes to probation on the horizon will bring opportunities to develop IOM.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. National Child Protection Inspections: 2019 thematic report



This report analyses where the police service has made progress, and where improvements are needed, in its work to protect children. It is based on inspections of individual police forces in England and Wales, plus Joint Targeted Area inspections carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services along with Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and HMI Probation.



Whilst improvements have been made in police forces' understanding of risk faced by vulnerable children since the last report in 2015, further resourcing is needed in a time of decreasing police officer numbers and budget cuts. The authors call for more resourcing amongst partner agencies, not just the police. There is also a real need for a more proactive approach from the police and partners in identifying at-risk children, as the current system is unsustainable.

Ministry of Justice. Tackling Racial Disparity in the Criminal Justice System: 2020 Update

There remains a lot of work to be done, according to this update in response to the Lammy Review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the Criminal Justice System. The report lays out work which has been undertaken to date, part of which has been the inclusion of people with lived experience. However, the report notes that there remains an overrepresentation of BAME individuals in the System.

Briefings

Prison Reform Trust. Working it Out – Improving employment

This briefing provides an overview of the evidence on women's employment opportunities and barriers, considers the national policy context, profiles good practice, and makes recommendations to accelerate progress. Drawing on the experiences and insights of women themselves and the organisations that support them, its purpose is to inform policy and practice and improve employment outcomes for women in contact with the criminal justice system.



Prison Reform Trust. Bromley Briefings Prison Fact file: Winter 2019

The latest in a series of fact files produced by the Prison Reform Trust analyses a range of challenges facing prisons nationally, particularly overcrowding and overstretching.

For example, it finds that there has been an increase in the number of life sentences compared with previous years. Fewer than 100 people per year were given life sentences between 2000 and 2003, in contrast to 249 people in 2008 and 1,872 by September 2019. It is suggested that the most likely and significant cause of the recent growth in the use of long sentences has been changes in sentencing legislation, particularly the 2003 Criminal Justice Act and subsequent amendments, as opposed to any changes in the nature or severity of offending itself.

They conclude that the growing numbers of people serving long sentences means that our prisons are likely to remain overcrowded for the foreseeable future, regardless of any changes in sentencing practice for less serious offending or improvements in reconviction rates. The discussion then turns to the possible impacts of upcoming reforms to be introduced by Government.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Impact of organisational inputs upon the quality of delivery (probation services)

Putting a spotlight on the relationship between the inputs into an organisation (such as staffing) and the activities and impacts at the level of individual cases, this report's findings highlight the challenges faced in probation today. In particular, it identifies a clear need for an increased focus on workload manageability, with caseload numbers representing a key issue. Practitioner skills were also found to be crucially important. There was also agreement that relationships with other agencies were effective to support desistance and manage risk of harm, which was associated with the quality of delivery.

Interestingly, there was also a significant association between responsible officers' views on the sufficiency of in-house training, and the authors' judgements regarding the effective implementation of the sentence. There was clear scope for improvement in access to in-service training.

Howard League for Penal Reform. Justice does not stop at the prison gate: Justice and fairness in prisons. Briefing one

In this first of the Howard League's new series on justice and fairness in prisons, the central message is of the need to break a cycle of conflict and harm caused by unjust and unfair



treatment. It highlights the need to tackle a range of factors in order for things to improve, including: a punitive culture within prisons; overcrowding; prison overuse; and rising levels of violence in prisons.

It is suggested that through shifting towards a more robust and rights-based approach, and facilitating a sense of agency and responsibility amongst prisoners, improvements could be made in the form of fairer treatment and culture, safer prisons, lower reoffending rates, and improved working conditions for staff.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. PEEL spotlight report: Diverging under pressure

Here, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) paint a picture of increasing splintering in the quality of service provided by the police across England and Wales. Although many forces are performing well, consistency is found to be a key issue. Key problem areas are: forces understanding demand in their area (which is key to using resources effectively and planning for the future), and a determination to maintain and improve how the public is treated, particularly through the fair and proper use of stop and search.