

Safeguarding Information and Research Digest - Issue 12

May 2014

The LSCB Safeguarding Information and Research Digests provide a concise summary of recently published research knowledge on particular topics and signpost routes to reports and further information.

The Safeguarding Information Research Digest is designed to provide access to research information to a varied audience working across children and young people's services. The information is drawn from relevant electronic resources and databases, journals and texts and where appropriate from alternative sources such as inspection reports and annual reports as identified by authors.

The digests do not provide a definitive statement of all evidence on a particular issue.

Children and Families Act 2014

Royal Assent was granted on 13 March 2014. The Act covers the work of children's services (for adoptions, family justice, special educational needs, childcare and the Children's Commissioner), local government legal teams (for adoptions and family proceedings) and HR teams (shared parental leave, paternal time off work for ante-natal care, and reform of law on requesting flexible working).

Overview of the Act is available at: [overview of the Children and Families Act](#)

The full act is available at: [full act](#) on legislation.gov.uk

Powers to delegate children's social care functions

The government is consulting on draft regulations relating to the Local Authority's 'Powers to delegate children's social functions'. The draft regulations are available at: <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1961&external=no&menu=1>

The consultation is taking place from 17th April to 30th May 2014.

Professor Le Grand's review of children's services capacity

On Thursday 27 March 2014, the Children's Minister, Edward Timpson MP, wrote to Sir Merrick Cockrell to outline the Government's response to recommendations for the future delivery of children services in Birmingham City Council. This included the appointment of Lord Norman Warner as Commissioner for Children's Social Care in Birmingham, to oversee future improvement work in the council. The minister has also asked Professor Julian Le

Grand to oversee the commissioning of an additional piece of work to "explore developing capacity for delivering children's services, including outside of local authorities".

Adoption

The Adoption Leadership Board has appointed Sir Martin Narey as its independent Chair, accountable to the Children's Minister Edward Timpson MP. The Board intends to establish Regional Adoption Boards, led by a designated Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) member for the region and supported by a named sponsor from the National Leadership Board. Each Regional Board will be supported by a chief executive and lead member, who will provide additional support and oversight to local arrangements. Please contact ian.dean@local.gov.uk if you would be interested in acting as a 'Member Champion' for your region, and he will provide further information on how the role will work in practice.

Child neglect

Two important reports on child neglect were published this month. Ofsted's 'In the child's time' report summarises the findings of a thematic inspection of council responses to child neglect in 11 areas. The report contains a number of learning points for councils alongside examples of effective practice from the sample areas, although it is worth noting that its focus was limited to children under 10.

Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/ofsted-neglected-children-must-be-better-protected>

Action for Children's policy report, 'Child neglect: the scandal that never breaks', was published to coincide with the Ofsted report, leading with the headline finding that one in 10 children in the UK is a victim of neglect. The report calls on the Government to produce a coordinated national strategy to tackle neglect, and is available on the Action for Children website. Action for Children has also produced a range of resources to assist local areas in their response to neglect, including training tools and a resource pack for practitioners.

Available at: <http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/8678803/scandal2014.pdf>

Child sexual exploitation

["If only someone had listened"](#) the final report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (November 2013)

The Office of the Children's Commissioner for England undertook a 2 year inquiry into the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England. The final report of the inquiry, published in November 2013, focuses on what can and should be done to protect children

and young people from sexual exploitation, how to support those who have been victims and how to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence perpetrated by gangs and groups'. The report identified:

- 9 significant failings in the current response to tackle and address child sexual exploitation
- 9 foundations of effective practice for safeguarding children and young people from CSE based on the examples of good practice and information collected
- See Me Hear Me framework for action - based on 7 principles of effective practice. The framework sets out what needs to be done and how, and focuses on the voice of the child, voice of the professionals and protecting the child.

Report of the Parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of legislation for tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the UK

The [final report of the Parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of legislation for tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the UK](#) has been published by Barnardo's and Sarah Champion MP. Cllr David Simmonds, Chair of the LGA Children and Young People Board, gave evidence to this inquiry, which recommends that a legal loophole be closed to allow police to step in sooner if they suspect a child is being groomed for sex. This includes grooming online. Under current legislation for someone to be arrested for the offence of "meeting a child following sexual grooming" there must be at least two incidences of contact before a meeting takes place, with the intention of abusing them. The full report is available on the Barnardo's website.

Last month also saw the launch of a new [child sexual exploitation \(CSE\) proforma](#), to help health professionals across the UK identify young people attending sexual health services who may be at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation. This may prove useful to councils when commissioning sexual health services for young people as part of their new public health role, and is available from the Brook website.

Clinical Judgement and Decision-Making in Children's Social Work: An analysis of the 'front door' system

A study carried out by the government's Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) into social workers' decisions regarding initial referrals to the child protection system has found that social workers avoid making decisions later in the working day due to mental exhaustion.

The full research report is available at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305516/RR337 - Clinical Judgement and Decision-Making in Childrens Social Work.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305516/RR337_-_Clinical_Judgement_and_Decision-Making_in_Childrens_Social_Work.pdf)

Keeping Children Safe in Education

The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance' has now been published and can be found on the .GOV website, along with an eight-page section for all staff and a copy of the consultation on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education report'.

The guidance has all safeguarding information schools and colleges need in one place and it sets out clearly who needs to take action, what action they need to take and whether the action is a 'should' or a 'must'. The guidance is effective immediately because there is no change in statutory duties. While no statutory duties have changed, there is a greater emphasis on referrals of cases of abuse and neglect to children's social care, and on proportionate recruitment checks of staff, particularly visitors, volunteers and contractors.

Available at: ['Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance'](#)

Available at: [Consultation on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education report' response](#)

Court Orders

The Department for Education (DfE) has published statutory guidance for England and Wales about **court orders** and the roles of the police and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. Issues covered include an overview of the Children Act 1989 and changes made to some of the court-related sections of the Act by the Children and Families Act 2014.

Available at: [Gov.uk](#)

Family Justice System

Reforms to the **family justice system** in England and Wales came into force on the 22 April 2014. Implemented reforms include: the introduction of a 26 week time limit for care proceedings and compulsory family mediation information meetings for separating parents.

Available at: [Gov.uk](#)

How safe are our children?

The NSPCC has compiled child protection data from government statistics and research findings to measure the extent of abuse and neglect in the UK. The report suggests that demand for services is outgrowing expenditure and that a greater focus is needed on early intervention. The report sets out 20 indicators that cover: child deaths; recorded abuse offences; self-reported abuse; child protection plans; contacts with ChildLine and the NSPCC helpline; and public attitudes toward abuse and neglect. The findings include: online abuse continues to be a growing issue; the number of children on child protection registers and protection plans continues to increase in England, Wales and Scotland

Publication details: London: NSPCC, 2014

Available at: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/how-safe/how-safe-2013_wda95178.html

Children's Rights Director for England report

The former Children's Rights Director for England has published his final report on the views and experiences of children and young people with regard to rights, welfare and safeguarding issues. Amongst the top 10 rights voted as most important by children were the right to be: protected from abuse; not to be bullied; and not to be treated or punished in a way that is cruel and meant to make them feel bad about themselves.

Available at: [The children's views digest.](#)

NSPCC factsheets

Two new factsheets have been published on NSPCC Inform: Recognising signs of abuse at different stages of a child's development and What can schools do to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation?

Available at: [Recognising signs of abuse at different stages of a child's development](#)

Available at: [What can schools do to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation?](#)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The Home Office has published case studies containing frank accounts of womens' and girls' experiences of dealing with female genital mutilation (FGM) in the UK.

Available at: [Gov.UK](#)

Looked After Children Living Away from Home

Ofsted has published a report on looked after children living away from home. Key findings include: corporate parents did not give enough priority to assuring themselves children living out of the area were receiving high quality care and support. Recommendations include: local authorities should give high priority to the needs of looked after children in out of area placements and closely monitor the quality and impact of the care and support they receive.

Available at: [From a distance: looked after children living away from their home area \(PDF\)](#)

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Boards' Procedures

<http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

NSPCC inform: child protection advice, support, information, factsheets and research

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/informhub_wda49931.html

NSPCC CASPAR - Current awareness service for policy, practice and research: regular mail outs for updates and information.

Sign up for the news service by following this link:

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/ExternalNewsServices/Default.aspx?NewsServiceID=2>

Action for Children - Research, resources and information

<http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/policy-research>

Barnardos - Research and information including fact sheets

[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what we do/policy research unit/research and publications.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/policy_research_unit/research_and_publications.htm)

Sign up for regular Newsletter: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/email_subscription_form.htm

Community Care - News, information and research

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Home/>

Sign up for regular Newsletter: <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/Register/registermain/>

National Children's Bureau - Policy, research and information

<http://www.ncb.org.uk/policy-evidence>

Research in Practice - Research, information and resources to support evidence informed practice

<http://www.rip.org.uk/>

(Leicester City Council employees can register using their work email address)

Tri-x Child Care Ltd – Policy Briefings

http://www.trixonline.co.uk/website/news/news_index.html

(Trix Policy briefings are free and you can subscribe for free briefing alerts)