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Children/Young People/Families

First 1000 days of life (26/02/19)

The first 1000 days of life, from conception to age 2, is a critical phase during which the foundations of a child's development are laid. If a child's body and brain develop well then, their chances of a healthy life are improved. Exposure to adversity during this period can have lifelong consequences. A [study](#) in The Lancet in 2017 (open access article) found that people who experienced at least four adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) were more likely to get heart disease, cancer and many mental health problems than those with no experience of ACEs. They were also thirty times more likely to have attempted suicide.

The Health and Social Care Committee of the House of Commons has completed its inquiry, and published a report on the [First 1000 days of life](#). The Committee is asking the Government to produce a long-term cross-Government strategy setting demanding goals to reduce adverse childhood experiences, improve school readiness and reduce infant mortality and child poverty.

The Committee then wants all local authorities to develop plans - with the local NHS, communities and the voluntary sector - to implement this strategy, bringing improved support for children, parents and families in their area. Funds should be pooled to deliver shared, agreed actions.

[News release](#)

Local Government Association [briefing](#)

[Institute of Health Visiting](#)

Early years providers cost study: 2018 (28/02/19)

There have been several important changes in childcare policy in England in the past three years. These include the introduction of 30 hours free childcare for children of working parents and Tax-Free Childcare as well as ongoing expansion of support for childcare expenses in the rollout of Universal Credit to parents.

The Department for Education has published this [report](#) which provides an analysis of:

the cost and income structure for different types of early years providers
revenue sources, including parental fees and funding levels
the reasons why costs vary across the early years market.

It also includes a comparison with data collected in 2015 as part of the SEED cost and funding of early education report.

See also [Coram Childcare Survey 2019](#) and [news release](#)

[Children and Young People Now](#)

Changes in millennial adolescent mental health and health-related behaviours over 10 years (27/02/19)

There is evidence that mental health problems are increasing, and substance use behaviours are decreasing. This paper, authored by researchers from University College London and the University of Liverpool, aimed to investigate recent trends in mental ill health and health-related behaviours in two cohorts of UK adolescents in 2005 and 2015.

Data was collected from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), a cohort born in 1991–92, and the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), a cohort of 19 517 children born in 2000–02, sampled from the whole of the UK.

A key message of the research is that large increases are observed in some mental health difficulties (depression, self-harm), obesity and poorer sleeping habits in the 10 years between 2005 and 2015, whereas antisocial behaviour and substance use seem to be decreasing or are unchanged.

The paper is published in the [International Journal of Epidemiology](#) (abstract). Full text available with Observatory OpenAthens login.

[BBC News Health](#)

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Communities and Local Government

Funding of local authorities' children's services inquiry (25/02/19)

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee of the House of Commons continues its [inquiry](#) into funding for local authorities' children's services.

An evidence session this week looked at a nation-wide view of the funding challenges facing children's services and the effectiveness of current local authority solutions to address increasing demand. It also examined variations in spending and outcomes across the country, and the role of private sector in providing services.

The Committee heard from Ofsted, the Children's Commissioner, the LGO and various local authority and staff representatives.

The session is available to [view](#) on Parliamentlive.tv, and is also available in [written](#) format.

[News release](#)

New analysis by national children's charities on funding for children's services (26/02/19)

Analysis of official figures by Action for Children, Barnardo's, NSPCC, The Children's Society and the National Children's Bureau has identified "kids' cuts hotspots" across England – where local councils have faced the biggest real-term drop in this funding.

Councils are facing a £3 billion funding gap for children's services by 2025, with many services having already been stripped back or shut down. Over 1,000 children's centres have closed since 2009 while 760 youth centres have shut since 2012. The charities are warning that thousands more children and young people could fall into crisis if these cuts continue.

See also The Children's Society [written evidence](#) to Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee.

[National Children's Bureau](#)
[The Children's Society](#)

[Association of Directors of Children's Services \(ADCS\)](#)
[Local Government Association](#)

[Children and Young People Now](#)
[The Guardian](#)

Kent and Medway to tackle gangs and youth violence (26/02/19)

Kent and Medway have [secured](#) £1.3m from the Government's Supporting Families Against Youth Crime Fund to help prevent young people becoming involved in gangs and youth violence.

The award will enable a partnership of Kent County Council (KCC), Medway Council, Kent Police, Met Police and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver a collaborative two-year project to reduce the impact of gang activity in north Kent and Medway and protect children at risk of criminal exploitation.

The funding will be used to provide support for vulnerable people through peer mentoring and community support workers, linking up services for those who may otherwise become involved in knife crime and gang violence.

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Education

Improving school readiness: initiatives across the south-east (28/02/19)

This [report](#), published by Public Health England, is for professionals working across the early years system. It aims to improve school readiness and provides data and evidence relating to school readiness with a public health focus.

It describes the current situation across the south-east of England and details local school readiness initiatives and case studies. It also signposts national and local resources and training for supporting school readiness and gives a parental perspective using results from focus groups.

APPG on Social Mobility: Closing the attainment gap report (21/02/19)

This inquiry, by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Mobility, looked at the gap in attainment between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from more affluent backgrounds and why this gap is more pronounced in different parts of the country.

The inquiry ran from November 2017 – June 2018, encompassing three evidence sessions held in Parliament and a call for written submissions. [‘Closing the regional attainment gap’](#) summarises the evidence submitted to the report in both written and oral form, and makes a series of practical policy recommendations to tackle the issues highlighted.

The [Sutton Trust](#) has acted as secretariat to the APPG since December 2015.

[Summary of recommendations](#)

Off-rolling in English schools (20/02/19)

There are many reasons why children might be removed from the school roll, from moving home to permanent exclusion following disciplinary action. In recent years, however, concerns have been raised about children leaving the school roll for other reasons, for example to ‘game’ the school performance system, or to relieve financial pressure on schools.

This House of Commons Library [Briefing Paper](#) provides an overview of the concerns that increasing numbers of children in England are being ‘off-rolled’ for reasons that do not serve their best interests.

See also [Skipping School: Invisible Children](#), report by the Children's Commission, February 2019.

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Environment/Transport/Housing

The Cost of Unhealthy Housing to the National Health Service (26/02/19)

In October 2018 the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for healthy homes and buildings published a [paper](#) on the topic. This week a debate took place in Westminster Hall on the costs to the NHS of unhealthy housing.

The House of Commons Library published a [research briefing](#) ahead of the event. The [proceedings](#) of the debate are available in Hansard.

Air pollution: outdoor air quality and health, QS181 (26/02/19)

There is national concern that not enough is being done to protect society’s most vulnerable from the effects of air pollution. In 2017, the UK government was criticised by the high court for breaching legal limits in 37 local authority areas and in 2018, London reached its legal annual air pollution limit only one month into the year. In response, the UK government announced its [Clean Air Strategy](#) (January 2019) which outlines plans to improve air quality in England.

This [quality standard](#), from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), covers road-traffic-related air pollution and its impact on health.

The quality statements deal with strategic plans, planning application, reducing emissions from public sector vehicle fleets, and advice for people with chronic respiratory or cardiovascular conditions.

[NICE news article](#)

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Health Protection/Emergencies

PrEP Impact Trial to be expanded (28/02/19)

PrEP (HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis) is a medicine for HIV negative people. It can reduce the risk of acquiring HIV when taken as instructed.

Implementation of the [PrEP Impact trial](#) has over 11,500 participants already enrolled in this HIV prevention measure. [NHS England](#) has committed to provide funding for the PrEP drug and research costs for up to 26,000 individuals, based on the current terms.

In January, the PrEP Oversight Board confirmed its agreement in principle to double the number of places available on the PrEP Impact trial following expert recommendations by researchers but wanted more information on the impact on services. New places will now start to be released.

Scarlet fever: being aware of the symptoms (28/02/19)

Public Health England (PHE) has published the latest national data on notifications of scarlet fever disease in England from invasive Group A streptococci (iGAS) disease surveillance.

The [report](#) shows that 6,316 cases of scarlet fever have been reported since mid-September 2018, compared to an average of 6,680 for the same period over the last 5 years. There were 409 cases reported for the most recent week (18 to 24 February 2019).

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness but it is highly infectious so PHE is [advising](#) parents to be on the lookout for symptoms, which include a sore throat, headache and fever with a characteristic fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel. If signs of scarlet fever are suspected, it is important to contact your local GP or NHS 111.

Early treatment with antibiotics is important as it helps reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia and the spread of the infection to others. Children or adults diagnosed with scarlet fever are advised to stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

Measles, mumps and rubella: laboratory confirmed cases in England 2018 (28/02/19)

Public Health England (PHE) publishes [quarterly reports, with commentary](#), on cases confirmed by PHE's Virus Reference Department or national routine laboratory testing (mumps only).

- In England, 97 new measles infections were confirmed in the last quarter of 2018 compared to 143 in the period between July and September 2018. This brings the total of laboratory confirmed cases in England to 966 compared to 259 in 2017.
- A decrease in mumps activity was observed in England this quarter with 170 laboratory confirmed mumps infections, in line with usual seasonal trends. The total number of mumps infection confirmed in England in 2018 was 1024 compared to 1796 infections in 2017. Mumps cases were reported in all regions of England, predominantly in young adults aged 15 to 34 years.
- One new rubella infection was confirmed this quarter in an adult male, believed to have been acquired abroad. The number of rubella infections confirmed in England in 2018 was 2, both of which were believed to have been acquired abroad.

Emerging infections: characteristics, epidemiology and global distribution (27/02/19)

The reasons for disease emergence are complex and multi-factorial, but essentially result from an interaction between the microorganism itself and human activities. These interactions can be complex and new infections often result from several factors together or in sequence. For example, population movement may spread a previously localised infection to a city where poor public health infrastructure allows establishment in the wider population. The city may then act as a source for further spread.

Public Health England has [updated information](#) on the reasons behind human infectious disease emergence, including a timeline and a global map.

Zika virus (ZIKV): clinical and travel guidance (27/02/19)

Zika is a mosquito-borne infection caused by Zika virus, a member of the genus flavivirus and family Flaviviridae. Zika virus was first isolated from a monkey in the Zika forest in Uganda in 1947.

Following the 2015-16 outbreak in the Americas and Caribbean, Zika virus is now thought to be endemic in this region as well as in much of Africa and Asia.

[Public Health England](#) and the [National Travel Health Network and Centre \(NaTHNaC\)](#) have reviewed and updated their Zika travel and sexual transmission advice and have made changes to the risk ratings in some countries.

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Information/Evidence/Research/Ethics

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - October 2018 to December 2018, Experimental Statistics Report (28/02/19)

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Enhanced Dataset is a repository for individual level data collected by healthcare providers in England, including acute hospital providers, mental health providers and GP practices.

The [dataset](#), published by NHS Digital, supports the Department of Health's FGM Prevention Programme by presenting a national picture of the prevalence of FGM in England.

Key facts:

- There were 1,715 individual women and girls who had an attendance where FGM was identified or a procedure related to FGM was undertaken in the period October 2018 to December 2018. These accounted for 2,150 attendances reported at NHS trusts and GP practices where FGM was identified or a procedure related to FGM was undertaken.
- There were 975 newly recorded women and girls in the period October 2018 to December 2018. Newly recorded means this is the first time they have appeared in this dataset. It does not indicate how recently the FGM was undertaken, nor does it mean that this is the woman or girl's first attendance for FGM.

ONS: People who have never worked (28/02/19)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published [analysis](#) of the number of people who have never done paid work, their reasons for not working and some of their personal characteristics.

Key figures:

- Around 3.6 million adults in the UK have never been paid for work.
- Of more than 41 million 16- to 64-year-olds in the UK, 75% were employed in July 2017 to June 2018, but there were still nearly 10% who had never done paid work.
- Young people aged 16 to 24 years represent most of the population who have never had a paid job – 71% including students. Even excluding those in full-time study, more than half of people who have never carried out paid work are aged under 30 years (52%).

See also [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: February 2019](#)

NHS Key Statistics: England, February 2019 (18/02/19)

The House of Commons Library has published a [research briefing](#) summarising NHS demand performance and capacity of services in England.

The paper examines trends in the following areas:

- Accident & Emergency attendance and performance
- Ambulance demand and response times
- Waiting times and waiting lists for routine treatment
- Waiting times for cancer diagnosis and treatment
- Cancelled operations
- Delayed discharges and transfers of care
- Diagnostic waiting times and activity
- Waiting times for mental health treatment
- Workforce numbers for doctors, nurses and other staff
- Hospital activity, referrals and admissions
- Bed availability and occupancy.

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International

EASO Practical Guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures (20/02/19)

This new [practical guide](#), from the [European Asylum Support Office \(EASO\)](#), aims to provide guidance and support to the competent national authorities on the required guarantees and safeguards which will ensure that the child's best interests are given primary consideration when making decisions affecting the child in the asylum procedures. It is divided into five sections including an overview of the terminology, the background and elements of the best interests of the child, the relevant guarantees, guidance on how to assess the best interests in practice and vulnerability and risk indicators.

The guide provides generic guidance and can be used as a benchmark to update and/or improve specific standard operating procedures developed for children at national level.

[News release](#)

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Legislation/Crime/Prisons

Transforming Rehabilitation: Progress review (01/03/19)

The Ministry of Justice (the Ministry), through HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS), is responsible for probation services in England and Wales.

In 2013, the Ministry embarked on major reforms of probation services. It dissolved 35 self-governing probation trusts and created 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) to manage offenders who pose a low or medium risk of harm. It created a public sector National Probation Service (NPS) to manage offenders who pose higher risks.

In February 2015, the CRCs were transferred to eight, mainly private sector, suppliers working under contracts, managed by HMPPS, that were to run to 2021-22. The Ministry considered that its reforms would deliver reductions in reoffending corresponding to £10.4 billion net economic benefits to society over the seven-year period of the contracts. In July 2018,

the Justice Secretary acknowledged that the quality of probation services being delivered was falling short of expectations and announced that the Ministry will terminate its CRC contracts 14 months early, in December 2020.

This [report](#), from the National Audit Office, takes stock of the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms following the decision to terminate the CRC contracts. It finds that CRCs have underinvested in probation services, which have suffered as a result. There is little evidence of hoped-for innovation and many of the early operational issues, such as friction between the NPS and CRCs, persist. Although the number of reoffenders has reduced, the average number of reoffences they commit has increased.

[News release](#)

[Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy](#)

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Maternity/Infants

Mums get help from NHS maternity advice line (26/02/19)

[NHS England](#) reports on a pioneering advice line staffed by midwives which offers new and expectant mothers' guidance on labour, breastfeeding, sleep and other health problems.

Women can get advice over the phone 24 hours a day, 365 days per year from the [Surrey Heartlands](#) Pregnancy Advice Line. Around 20,000 women have benefited to date.

The midwives' direct people to the most appropriate place of care and provide midwifery advice for 999 operators and other health care professionals. The line also frees up midwives' time to deliver more personal care, by reducing the need for hospital visits and redirecting calls directly to a trained specialist.

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Mental Health and Wellbeing

The epidemiology of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder in a representative cohort of young people in England and Wales (01/03/19)

Despite the emphasis placed on childhood trauma in psychiatry, comparatively little is known about the epidemiology of trauma and trauma-related psychopathology in young people. This research, published in [Lancet Psychiatry](#) (open access article), set out to evaluate the prevalence, clinical features, and risk factors associated with trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in young people.

The epidemiological study is based on participants from the Environmental Risk Longitudinal Twin Study, a population-representative birth-cohort of 2232 children born in England and Wales in 1994–95.

The researchers found that nearly one in three young people experienced trauma and one in four of those exposed to trauma developed PTSD by age 18 years. Trauma-exposed young people, and particularly those with PTSD, had complex psychiatric presentations, high risk of harm to themselves, and functional impairment. However, only a minority received help from health professionals.

Eating Disorders Awareness Week EADW 2019

The theme of [Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2019 \(EADW\)](#) on 25 February to 3 March is 'Breaking down barriers.'

Stereotypes about who gets an eating disorder are preventing BAME, LGBT+ and people from less affluent backgrounds from seeking and getting medical treatment, according to [research](#) published by the UK's eating disorder charity Beat.

The House of Commons Library prepared an [information pack](#) for a debate scheduled to take place in Westminster Hall mid-week.

BBC South East [Annabelle's story](#) animation
Local Government Association [briefing](#)

CQC: Monitoring the Mental Health Act in 2017/18 (26/02/19)

The Mental Health Act 1983 is the legal framework that authorises hospitals to detain and treat people who have serious mental health needs and who are putting their own health or safety, or of other people, at risk of harm. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has a duty to monitor and report on how services do this.

CQC has seen some improvement in the quality of care planning for patients who are subject to the Mental Health Act but continues to be concerned about the quality and safety of mental health wards.

Throughout 2017/18, CQC carried out visits to mental health wards to meet patients, review their care and speak to staff on the frontline to inform its annual report to Parliament on how health services in England are applying the Mental Health Act.

[Report](#)
[News release](#)

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Pharmacy/Prescribing

Update on medicines and medical products supply (25/02/19)

The [Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\)](#) is working closely with trade bodies, product suppliers, the health and care system in England, the devolved administrations and crown dependencies (the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey) to make detailed plans to ensure the continued supply of medical products to the UK in the event of a no-deal EU Exit.

Together with industry and the health and care system, DHSC has analysed the requirements and supply chains. Around three-quarters of the medicines and over half of the clinical consumables we use come from or via the EU. The main risk to supply is reduced traffic flow between the ports of Calais and Dover or Folkestone.

By securing additional freight capacity to ensure a continued flow of products, stockpiling and providing warehouse storage capacity as a further contingency, and removing regulatory barriers, medicines and medical products should continue to be available for the NHS, other healthcare providers and the public in the event of a no-deal EU exit.

Local stockpiling is unnecessary and could cause shortages in other areas, which could put patient care at risk. It is important that patients order their repeat prescriptions as normal and keep taking their medicines as normal.

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Public Health/Health Promotion

Reframing the conversation on the social determinants of health (02/19)

This [briefing](#) presents the main findings from research commissioned by the Health Foundation and carried out by the FrameWorks Institute, analysing public understanding, expert opinion and media narrative around health. It also presents findings from questions sponsored by the Health Foundation in the 2017 British Social Attitudes survey.

Four key challenges are identified that communicators must tackle to achieve wider public acceptance of the evidence on the social determinants of health: broadening what is understood by the term 'health'; increasing understanding of the role of social determinants of health; increasing understanding of how social and economic inequalities drive health inequalities; generating an understanding of the policy action needed to keep people healthy.

Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On (27/02/19)

The [Health Foundation](#) is working with Professor Sir Michael Marmot and his team at the [Institute of Health Equity](#) to examine progress in addressing health inequalities in England and propose recommendations for future action.

Sir Michael Marmot [blogs](#) about stalling life expectancy increases and the importance of tackling the health inequalities, and in a [video](#) together with Dr Jennifer Dixon explains why this review is needed.

Quality Watch: Public Health (26/02/19)

Six years on from the shift of responsibility for public health services from the NHS to local authorities, and three years on from the publication of QualityWatch report, [Focus on: Public health and prevention](#), the unit, a joint research programme by the Nuffield Trust and the Health Foundation, re-examined indicators to see how the quality of public health services has changed in recent years.

Trends in public health services across [five key areas](#) are examined:

- obesity
- smoking
- substance misuse (drugs and alcohol)
- sexual and reproductive health
- immunisations.

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Safeguarding

Keeping kids safe: Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation (28/02/19)

Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England, has published an in-depth study looking at children in England who are members of gangs. The report estimates there are 27,000 children in England who identify as a gang member, only a fraction of whom are known to children's services.

The research looks into the characteristics of children involved in gangs. Compared to other children known to social services or other child offenders, those with gang associations are:

- 95% more likely to have social, emotional and mental health issues and more than twice as likely to be self-harming
- 41% more likely to have a parent or carer misusing substances and eight times more likely to be misusing substances themselves
- 37% more likely to have witnessed domestic violence
- 37% more likely to be missing/absent from school.

The report also shows how a number of early warning signs of gang-based violence have been on the rise in recent years:

- Referrals to children's services where gangs were identified as an issue rose by 26% between 2015/16 and 2016/17
- Permanent exclusions rose by 67% between 2012/13 and 2016/17
- Hospital admissions for children who have been assaulted with a sharp object rose 20% between 2015/16 and 2016/17
- The number of children cautioned/convicted for possession of weapons offences rose 12% between 2016 and 2017.

As part of the research, 25 Local Safeguarding Children Boards in 'high-risk' areas were asked about their response to gang violence and criminal exploitation, including their estimates of the numbers of children in gangs or at risk of being drawn into gangs. The responses showed many areas had no information on the levels of gang activity and risk among children in their area, and that it was often the areas with the highest levels of gang violence that had the least information.

[Report](#)
[News release](#)
[Children and Young People Now](#)

IICSA: Sexual Abuse of Children in Custodial Institutions: 2009-2017 Investigation Report (28/02/19)

The Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has published its report on the sexual abuse of children in custodial institutions.

Focusing on the period from 2009 to 2017, the report shows that children held in young offender institutions and secure training centres are still not safe from sexual abuse.

The Inquiry discovered that many more complaints of child sexual abuse in custody have been made than official figures previously suggested. Information obtained directly from the institutions and authorities showed there were over 1,000 incidents of alleged sexual abuse reported between these years.

In respect of Medway Secure Training Centre, the Inquiry examined 11 allegations, which spanned a relatively narrow period from May 2015 to December 2016.

[Report](#)
[News release](#)

[Children and Young People Now](#)

NSPCC: Harmful Sexual Behaviour (22/02/19)

The NSPCC, in partnership with the NHS and supported by Health Education England, has launched new guidance on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) to help children's health professionals to identify risk.

The [online guidance](#) is targeted at sector workers including child and adolescent mental health teams, school mental health champions, school nurses, health visitors, youth offending and sexual health teams.

[Children and Young People Now](#)

NSPCC: online grooming offences (01/03/19)

New figures obtained by the [NSPCC](#) from Freedom of Information requests to every police force in England and Wales, reveal:

- a total of 5,161 crimes of sexual communication with a child recorded in 18 months
- almost a 50% increase in offence in offences recorded in latest six months compared to same period in previous year
- a 200% rise in recorded instances in the use of Instagram to target and abuse children over the same time period.

The Government is due to publish a white paper on online harms soon. The NSPCC is calling for statutory regulation to enforce a legal duty of care to children on social networks, backed by hefty fines if they fail.

[Share Aware: Keeping children safe](#)
[Online safety](#)

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Screening

Breast Screening Programme, England 2017-18 (28/02/19)

Women between the ages of 50 and 70 are invited for regular breast screening (every three years) under a national programme. Screening is intended to reduce mortality by detecting breast cancer at an early stage when there is a better chance of successful treatment.

This [report](#), from NHS Digital, presents information about the NHS Breast Screening Programme in England in 2017-18 and includes data on women invited for breast screening, coverage, uptake of invitations, outcomes of screening and cancers detected.

News release: [Proportion of women taking up breast screening invitations falls](#)

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Sexual Health

Sexual health inquiry: evidence session (26/02/19)

This week Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at Public Health England, spoke at the Health and Social Care Select Committee of the House of Commons as part of its [sexual health inquiry](#) about trends in sexual health and the challenges faced by commissioners of these services.

The session may be [viewed](#) on Parliamentlive.tv or the [written evidence](#) may be read in Hansard.

See also [Health Protection/Emergencies](#)

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Smoking/Tobacco Control

Vaping in England: evidence update February 2019 (27/02/19)

In the government's [Tobacco Control Plan for England](#), Public Health England (PHE) was asked to update its 2015 review of e-cigarettes and other novel nicotine delivery systems every year until the end of the current Parliament in 2022.

This [February 2019](#) update focuses on vaping prevalence and characteristics of e-cigarette use in adults and young people, and e-cigarette use in English stop-smoking services.

PHE commissioned a group of leading UK tobacco control researchers to produce this report, which underwent international peer review.

[News release](#)

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Social Care/Welfare

People's experience using adult social care services, QS182 (02/19)

This [quality standard](#), from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), covers the experience of adults using social care services. It applies to all settings where people use social care services, including people's own homes, residential care and community settings.

Its aim is to help people understand what care they can expect and to improve their experience by supporting them to make decisions about their care. The quality statements include care and support needs assessment, and empowering people to manage their personal budget.

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Workforce Development

New training for health visitors to boost early language skills (28/02/19)

Children most at risk of starting school without the basic language and communications skills are set to benefit from expert education support at home.

Health visitors – who routinely do home visits to check on a child's development at age two – will receive additional training to identify speech, language and communication needs early on, with a new assessment and support package.

Specialist training will be provided for 1,000 health visitors who will work in some of the most deprived communities in England, as part of the Government's drive to tackle the 'word gap' - the gap in communication skills between disadvantaged children and their peers.

[Speech](#) by Nadhim Zahawi MP
[News release](#) by the Department for Education and Public Health England.

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Workplace

Children's social work workforce 2018 (28/02/19)

The Department for Education has published [experimental statistics](#) from the statutory children's social work workforce data collection.

Key figures include:

- The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) children and family social workers at 30 September 2018 was 29,470, an increase of over 3% from the same point in 2017. The headcount (number of individuals regardless of working pattern) was 31,720, an increase of over 3% compared to 2017.
- Agency workers are recorded separately from children and family social workers employed directly by the local authority. The number of FTE agency workers at 30 September 2018 was 5,360, similar to the previous year.
- The number of FTE vacancies in 2018 was 5,810, again similar to the previous year.
- The number of children and family social workers leaving in the preceding 12 months was 5,150 (headcount).
- The turnover rate (defined as number of leavers divided by the number of workers in place at 30 September 2018) was 16% (headcount) compared to 15% in the previous year.
- The average caseload per children and family social worker was 17.4 cases (based on FTE counts), which is down from an average of 17.8 in 2017. Average caseload varied between local authorities from 12.0 for Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames to 26.8 for North East Lincolnshire. Some of this variation may be explained by different local practices in case management.

[Community Care 1](#)
[Community Care 2](#)

Personal Social Services: Staff of Social Services Departments, England 2018 (28/02/19)

This report, from NHS Digital, contains information on 112,200 jobs for people employed (directly and indirectly) by local authority adult social services departments in England as at September 2018.

The report will be of interest to central government (for policy development, monitoring and workforce planning), local government (for benchmarking), charities, academics and the general public. The report does not include information on staff employed in the independent sector (private and voluntary) or children's social services departments (published separately by the Department for Education).

The [report](#) has used data collected by the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) for the past seven years (from 2011). The NMDS-SC is managed by Skills for Care (SfC) on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and has been collecting information about social care providers and their staff since early 2006.

[News release](#)

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