

Policy & Parliamentary Information Digest



The Policy & Parliamentary Information Digest, exclusive to NCB members and staff, is a weekly round-up of news and new initiatives, parliamentary business, consultations, policy related documents, reports and statistics relating to children and young people. To sign up please email library@ncb.org.uk

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1. News and Initiatives

Delivering Differently for Young People: programme prospectus and form

This government initiative aimed at funding alternative ways of providing local authority youth services has opened for a second round of funding. The Cabinet Office has set aside £200,000 of funding to support up to five local areas in 2015/16 as part of the Delivering Differently for Young People programme. The deadline for applications is 6 October 2015.
7 September 2015

Summer-born children 'to get the right to start school later'

The Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, has announced the government's intention to give summer-born children the right to start in reception at the age of 5. He said admissions rules must be changed so that children born between April 1 and August 31 cannot be forced to go straight into year 1 if they wait to start school until they turn 5. In advance of proposed changes to the school admissions code, Mr Gibb has written an [open letter](#) to encourage schools and local authorities to take immediate action.
8 September 2015

Universities Minister demands better value for money for students

Jo Johnson, the Universities Minister, has outlined government plans to give students better value for money from their degrees, including action to support BME and disadvantaged white boys to get a degree.
9 September 2015

Nicky Morgan launches rugby character drive with Saracens FC

The Education Secretary joined rugby stars and coaches at a London school to launch a scheme using the skills of rugby coaches to instil grit and resilience in disaffected and disadvantaged children. The scheme will reach more than 17,000 pupils in schools across the country, as well as providing an intensive 33-week training course for almost 500 young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
10 September 2015

Prime Minister sets out vision for a "smarter state"

In a keynote speech ahead of the Spending Review, David Cameron said that the government will adopt a "smarter" approach to public services, running the state more like a business. The plans include changes to the way child protection and children's services are delivered, potentially by bringing in non-profit trusts or other partnerships. The PM highlighted children in care as a "standout area" for reform.
11 September 2015

Impact of smartphones on behaviour in lessons to be reviewed

The Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, has announced that an investigation into how to train teachers to tackle poor pupil behaviour will be expanded to cover wider issues such as the use of mobile phones and other devices in schools.
13 September 2015

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2. Parliamentary Proceedings

[Summer-born children \(education guidelines\)](#)

Adjournment debate tabled by Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) who argued that parents should have more control over when their children start school if they were born in the summer. He advised that some councils won't let children delay their schooling unless they are proven to have special educational needs but research showed that children who are young for their year are typically still seeking to catch up at GCSE level and are less likely to go to university. Calling on ministers to introduce consistency across the country to avoid a postcode lottery, Mr Hammond also said that children born prematurely should have their due date, rather than birth date, taken into account when applying for schools.

7 September 2015

[Care leavers' transition to adulthood](#)

The Commons Public Accounts Committee is looking at the initial impact of the government's Care Leaver Strategy and how the DfE intends to improve the quality of services for care leavers. It held an oral evidence session on 7 September 2015 with Emma Corbett, Participation Manager, Who Cares? Trust; Dembo and Emanuel, who are care leavers; Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary, DfE; Paul Kissack, Director General, Children's Services and Departmental Strategy, DfE; and Alison O'Sullivan, President, Association of Directors of Children's Services.

8 September 2015

[Funding for disadvantaged pupils](#)

As part of its inquiry into the pupil premium, the Commons Public Accounts Committee has published written evidence submitted by the DfE and the Education Endowment Foundation.

9 September 2015

[Health: children](#)

In this oral parliamentary question, Baroness Tyler of Enfield asked the government about its plans to tackle the geographical health inequalities highlighted in the National Children's Bureau report [Poor beginnings](#). The report reveals how the health and development of children under five varies dramatically between different parts of England, with a child living in one area far more likely to be condemned to poor health than another living relatively close by.

10 September 2015

[Youth Justice](#)

In a written parliamentary statement, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, announced that Charlie Taylor, former Chief Executive of the National College of Teaching and Leadership, will lead a departmental review of the youth justice system. The review will report in summer 2016.

11 September 2015

[Representation of the People \(Young Persons' Enfranchisement and Education\) Bill](#)

Second reading for this private members' bill sponsored by Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford). The bill would reduce the voting age to 16 and also makes provision about young people's education in citizenship and the constitution through improved citizenship education. The debate was adjourned and is expected to resume on Friday 23 October 2015.

11 September 2015

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3. Consultations

[Transition from children's to adults' services: draft guideline consultation](#)

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

The guideline focuses on young people, passing through transition to adult services with health and/or social care needs. The guideline will cover young people up to the age of 25 who expect to go through a planned service transition.

Launch date: 10 September 2015

Closing date: 22 October 2015

[School and Early Years Finance \(England\) Regulations 2015: consultation document](#)

Department for Education

The DfE is seeking views on regulations that put in place the new, amended arrangements for local authorities to set school budgets for the financial year 2016 to 2017. Proposed changes include the ability of local authorities to use place-based funding for 2 year olds; and authorised expenditure in respect of Children and Young People with High Needs.

Launch date: 11 September 2015

Closing date: 13 November 2015

4. Documents and Reports

[Big Hopes Big Future: evaluation report. England pilot study](#)

Home-Start UK

This is the report of an evaluation of a trial programme which aimed to improve children's readiness for school. The pilot supported 225 families, including 540 children, in 12 Home-Starts in England, specifically targeting the most disadvantaged families including those who did not readily engage with their children's early learning because they lacked confidence or felt alienated from the education system. Families also lacked the books and toys needed to support their children's learning. Many had chaotic lifestyles or had poor health, disability, or English was not a first language. The study showed that children saw significant improvements in all four indications into school readiness: language and cognitive skills (e.g. identifying letters of the alphabet, recognising own name, reads at home, counting to five); Behavioural adjustment (e.g. tantrums, lack of patience, easily distracted, poor response to reprimands); Children's daily living skills (e.g. toilet training, using knife and fork); Family support (e.g. being punctual, absence levels from nursery). It also showed that the biggest impact was seen with children from families with complex problems. The improvement in language and cognition was particularly evident for children who were eligible for free school meals, for families with mental health issues and for those with multiple deprivation.

Published 2 September 2015

[An early years place for all: NAHT survey on extending childcare provision in schools](#)

National Association of Head Teachers

This survey of head teachers suggests that most primary schools are already subsidising free nursery places from the rest of their budget and fear that doubling the entitlement will force them to cut pupil numbers. The majority of respondents (58 per cent) reported that they did not receive sufficient funding to cover the cost of three- and four-year-old places, rising to 70 per cent for those funded at less than £4 an hour (accounting for 39 per cent of

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schools.) Just under a quarter of schools were offering places for two-year-olds (23 per cent), with the majority of these offering fewer than 20 places. Of these, 62 per cent said that the funding did not cover the cost of the places. Only 15 per cent of school-based early years providers believe the extension to the funded hours is sustainable under the current plans.

Published 7 September 2015

Children in London: the extra cost

Child Poverty Action Group

This report warns that London childcare costs leave many parents on the minimum wage little or no better off for working more. Most of the costs children bring are similar in and outside London, but the capital's housing and childcare costs are dramatically different from the rest of the UK - in London childcare can cost 50 per cent more. While many London parents think it's essential to work full-time to make ends meet, high childcare costs can mean they are not better off if they do - especially when children are young. The report says that a parent with one child working on the minimum wage in London would be around £4 a week worse off if they increased their working hours from 32 to 33 hours because of high childcare costs. Outside of London, a parent in the same situation would gain 62 pence currently or £1.16 under Universal Credit from April 2016. The report concludes that without measures to make housing and childcare more affordable in London, it is hard to see how the city can continue to be a place where families on modest incomes can live at an acceptable level.

Published 8 September 2015

Committing to child survival: a promise renewed. Progress report 2015

Unicef

Global child mortality has fallen by more than 50% since 1990. This report, which features updates and analyses of global, regional and national child mortality levels and trends, says that 25 years ago 12.7 million children under five died, but in 2015 the figure is projected to drop below six million for the first time. The report also provides current information on causes of child and maternal deaths, and coverage of key interventions to prevent them, as well as projections for the 2015–2030 period. It highlights impressive progress towards the commitment to increase child survival during the Millennium Development Goals era, which has saved the lives of some 48 million children under the age of 5 since 2000. Finally, it calls for intensified action in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Published 9 September 2015

Family friendly? The impact on children of the Family Migration Rules: a review of the financial requirements

Office of the Children's Commissioner

This report examines the impact of recent changes to financial requirements of the Immigration Rules on the wellbeing of children and their families and in particular on the enjoyment by children of their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It found that at least 15,000 children have been affected and are suffering distress and anxiety as a result of separation from a parent. The report also found that the UK has the least family-friendly family reunification policies out of 38 developed countries, largely because families with only one parent who is a British citizen need to earn a minimum of £18,600 per year to sponsor their partner's entry into the UK. This is 138 per cent of the minimum wage and is preventing many families with children from living together in the UK. Recommendations for the government to address the issue of

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separated families include: Increased flexibility when calculating a family's income to reflect family support available and local wage levels; inclusion of a requirement to consider the best interests of every child affected; amendment to forms and guidance to ensure decision-makers properly consider children's best interests in the decision making process; changes to the cost of applications and the application process; grant of visit visas to parents of children living in the UK; improvements to data collection and publication of applications.

Published 9 September 2015

Skype families: the effects on children of being separated from a mum or dad because of recent immigration rules

Office of the Children's Commissioner

Since 2012, only those who earn at least £18,600 a year can sponsor visas for a husband, wife or partner from outside Europe to enter the UK. The restrictions have created thousands of "Skype families" where children only have contact with one of their parents via the online service. This paper describes the impact on children - many of whom are reportedly suffering from significant stress and anxiety - and makes recommendations for change to family migration requirements to enable children to grow up with both parents in the UK.

Published 9 September 2015

"Always there when I need you": ChildLine review: what's affected children in April 2014–March 2015

NSPCC

ChildLine provided nearly 290,000 counselling sessions to children and young people in 2014-15. This annual review looks at what children talk about when they contact ChildLine and who contacts it and how. It focuses on some of the biggest and emerging issues of the last year: mental health, sexual abuse and partner abuse. It also includes a breakdown of statistics by age, gender and for each UK nation. Key findings include: During 2014-15, ChildLine counselled 276,956 children and supported a further 9,856 who had serious concerns about another child. The ChildLine website received over 3.2 million visits – 5% more than in 2013-14. The top 3 concerns counselled were family relationships, low self-esteem/unhappiness and abuse. Four of the top 10 issues related to mental health. These issues were self-harm, suicide, low self-esteem/unhappiness and mental health conditions. Together they accounted for almost one third of total concerns. There were 29,126 counselling sessions about abuse in 2014-15. The number of counselling sessions about low self-esteem/unhappiness increased by 9% from 2013-14. Sexual abuse (including online sexual abuse) saw an increase of 8% and domestic/partner abuse saw an increase of 4%.

Published 10 September 2015

Key stage 3: the wasted years?

Ofsted

This survey report explores whether students are sufficiently supported and challenged to make the best start to secondary school. It found that although pupils typically study a broad range of subjects at key stage 3, the transition to secondary is too often poorly managed and teaching fails to build on the gains pupils have made in primary school. Too many school leaders treat key stage 3 as the poor relation of key stages 4 and 5. As a result, the deployment of staff and resources is too often skewed towards GCSE and A-level exams. One in five inspection reports identified key stage 3 as an area for improvement. Inspectors also found that some schools are not using pupil premium funding effectively at key stage 3 and the quality of homework in key stage 3 is too variable and doesn't effectively enable pupils to consolidate or extend their learning. Recommendations for secondary school leaders include: ensure high quality teaching effectively prepares pupils

for subsequent study; create better partnerships with primary schools so that key stage 3 teachers can successfully maintain pupils' progress; guarantee that pupils have access to timely and high quality careers advice so they know what they should aim for.

Published 10 September 2015

Unprotected, overprotected: meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities who experience, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation

Barnardo's

Research from a coalition of organisations reveals that children with learning disabilities are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation than other children. Significant numbers of children with learning disabilities are not being adequately protected from sexual exploitation because of the false perception that they don't need sex and relationships education or accessible information about how to keep safe online and in the community. The research also shows that children with learning disabilities are not being adequately protected due to a worrying lack of specialist services and a failure to implement existing national and local policies. It highlights the need for more training for professionals and for services to work together to better prevent, identify and provide effective support for these children. Support for parents and raising awareness in the community is also crucial to making sure that children with learning disabilities are kept safe from sexual exploitation. The research report is accompanied by a practice guide and briefing papers for the UK's four nations.

Published 10 September 2015

Identifying and responding to suicide clusters and contagion: a practice resource

Public Health England

This toolkit, based on research of suicide clusters, is part of Public Health England's support for the government's suicide prevention strategy, and is aimed at people with responsibility for suicide prevention in local authorities and their partner agencies.

Published 10 September 2015

Study of early education and development (SEED): study of the quality of childminder provision in England

Department for Education

This study evaluating the quality of childminder provision in England looked at 99 childminder spread across five regions. It examined the characteristics and processes of childminder settings and what childminder quality looks like in practice; the key components of process and structural quality for early years provision in childminder settings; and the relationship between the structural characteristics of childminder settings and the process quality of care and education they offer. Key messages to be drawn from the findings are that keeping child: adult ratio low can help to reduce the likelihood of poor quality care amongst childminders; professional development can improve the quality of care provided by childminders; efforts should be made to encourage childminders to stay in the profession where they provide reasonably good quality as high quality is associated with more years of experience.

Published 11 September 2015

5. Statistics

Care applications in August 2015

Cafcass

In August 2015, Cafcass received a total of 943 care applications - a 4% increase compared to those received in August 2014.

Published 10 September 2015

Cafcass private law demand, August 2015

Cafcass

In August 2015, Cafcass received a total of 2,954 new private law cases – an 18% increase on August 2014 levels.

Published 10 September 2015

Youth custody data

Ministry of Justice

This statistical release gives figures for July 2015 on the population of children and young people in custody in secure children's homes (SCHs), secure training centres (STCs) and young offender institutions (YOIs). It also contains more detailed information on the make-up of the custody population by legal basis for detention, accommodation type, age group, gender, ethnicity and region of origin.

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The National Children's Bureau is a leading charity that for 50 years has been improving the lives of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable. We work with children and for children, to influence government policy, be a strong voice for young people and practitioners, and provide creative solutions on a range of social issues. For more information visit www.ncb.org.uk

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