

Independent review of children's social care newsletter: November 2021

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Introduction from Shazia Hussain, Head of Review Team

While the review has never moved at a slow pace, I think I speak for the whole team when I admit that the really challenging work has started in earnest this month as we move towards the final phase - developing the recommendations which we hope will change the future of children's social care for the better.

This period means bringing together the evidence and findings from conversations we've held during the review and thinking about solutions. So it's great to have input coming in from so many of you through our Call for Ideas. Thanks to all of you who have already contributed and I hope many more will take the opportunity before the 15th December - read more about the Call for Ideas below.

Last week we published our report looking at the cost of children's social care, which estimates the annual social cost of adverse outcomes for all children who have needed a social worker at £23 billion.

We've also held our third 'Focus on' debate which saw our expert panel tackle the topic of how best to structure children's social care, around 250 people joined online to watch the conversation and pose questions.

We're glad that Josh was able to get out and about in November to meet with people and groups - there were lots of highlights including a visit to Barrow to meet with some of the women working with "Women out West" - a women's centre in West Cumbria, meeting Krish Kandiah, Chair of the Adoption & Special Guardianship Leadership Board and visiting families and children's services leaders in the North West to discuss delivering early help services. Josh has also been speaking at a number of conferences including Drive Forward's #CareExperiencedWellbeing event, the County Council Network, the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum and National Children and Adult Services Conference.

Lastly, thanks for your continued interest in the work of the review. If you know someone who may also like to keep up to date with our work please consider forwarding this email to them and asking them to sign up via the link at the end of this email.

Shazia



Paying the Price

This month, we published new analysis which estimates the cost of children's social care in 'Paying the Price' - the analysis was carried out by Alma Economics on behalf of the review.

<https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Paying-the-Price.pdf>

The headline findings are:

- The social cost for each child that needs a social worker is estimated at £14,000 a year and £720,000 over their lifetime. Applied to those of all ages who have ever needed a social worker as a child, the estimated social cost totals £23 billion a year.
- England spends £13.1 billion per year on children's social care and associated public services. As well as the £10.5 billion directly spent by Local Authorities, this also includes £1.2 billion spent by central and local government on care proceedings and £1.3 billion spent on additional public services provided to children who need a social worker.

We think this is an important piece of work which highlights that children who need a social worker often experience poorer outcomes than average in health, wellbeing, education and employment. They are sadly also more likely to go on to experience homelessness, abuse alcohol, spend time in prison and have shorter lives.

The report adds to the case for changing children's social care so that it better guarantees that children can grow up with safety, stability and love.

'Focus on' events - Local, Regional, National

Our 'Focus on' series of events has continued this month with a debate 'local, regional, national' which looked at the pros and cons of different ways to deliver children's social care.

More than 250 people joined us as our expert panel took on this rather huge topic, which was one of the 'three dilemmas' identified by the review back in September.

You can watch the recording here: <https://youtu.be/qT3sq9qrcM>

Next week (on 9 December) our Focus On debate will be looking at another equally big topic 'Freedom vs Responsibility - How can we get the right balance in children's social care'.

Our panel will discuss how to design a system which manages risk but allows social workers and other professionals the freedom to support and spend time with children and families and make a positive difference in their lives.



You can reserve a place in our audience here where you can watch online and ask questions through the chat function.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/focus-on-freedom-vs-responsibility-getting-the-balance-right-tickets-214668217417>

Call for Ideas

Our Call for Ideas is now in full swing. We opened this in early November as a way of inviting everyone, from parents or care experienced young people to professionals on the frontline, to contribute ideas. We want to hear everything from big transformative ideas that might take years and require systemic change to smaller solutions that could deliver more immediate results for children and families.

This is an important part of the penultimate stage of the review ahead of Josh and the team formulating the review's final recommendations next Spring.

The Call for Ideas is open until 15 December and you can find out more here:

<https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/call-for-ideas/>

Local Area Deep Dives

The review team has now completed visits to ten local authorities as part of our local area 'Deep Dive' visits to speak to people involved in children's social care, from families with lived experience to local authority staff, police, health services, schools, community and third sector services.

The visits allowed the review team to understand how local systems work by listening to a broad range of people involved in children's social care, from those with lived experience to social workers and other frontline staff as well as senior local authority leaders. The team also met staff from other local services including police, health services, schools, community and third sector services.

The full list of areas visited is: Wolverhampton, Nottingham, Peterborough, Enfield, Cumbria, Darlington, Bath & North East Somerset, Southampton, North Lincs and Camden.

Conversations have covered diverse topics including: how organisations join up and work together; supporting children in care and care leavers; balancing support and protection; and helping children and teenagers who are at risk of harms outside of the home for example through county lines and sexual exploitation.

A summary of what we learned from the visits will be published to share the incredibly rich information we have gathered through this process.

In case you missed it:

- This blog from North Yorks DCS Stuart Carlton about an innovative approach to support care leavers of all ages in his region:
<https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/relationships-matter-more-than-age-ending-the-care-cliff-edge/>
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- This seminar from Family Rights Group about how to work in partnership with families in the child welfare and family justice system
<https://frg.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/reforming-law-and-practice/an-open-invitation-to-join-the-discussion-on-reforming-the-child-welfare-system/>
- Excellent podcast series 'Let's Talk Conflict' from Leap Confronting Conflict featuring a series of conversations about the care system.
<https://open.spotify.com/show/2MTzaERfWcZvJsk9cZLjno?si=a9b3b54570664f61&nd=1>
- Interview with Josh in MJ magazine
<https://www.themj.co.uk/-Boosting-childrens-chances/222028>
- Barnardos 'Making Change' podcast where Josh discusses the topic of community
<https://twitter.com/barnardos/status/1459112772504113162>
- Piece in Children & Young People Now from Josh about Paying the Price:
<https://www.cypnow.co.uk/blogs/article/being-big-hearted-about-children-s-social-care-is-not-enough>

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