The research summaries this month look at the impact on parenting of childhood abuse including:

- The views of teen mothers in foster care wanting to break the cycle of abuse
- Fathers' experiences of childhood, intimate partner violence and parenting
- The impact of childhood sexual trauma on mothers' parenting
- Black teen mothers' understandings of the effects of maltreatment on their parenting

Policy and report highlights this month

- Howard League publishes briefing on the Carlile Inquiry 10 years on
- How Safe Are Our Children? NSPCC’s state of the nation report
- Ofsted emphasises value of research-led practice in its social care annual report
- Ministers announce ‘Staying Closer’ pilots as Martin Narey publishes his review of residential care

Related resources by Research in Practice

- Adult attachment - application in practice with children and families: Frontline Briefing
- Attachment in children and young people [UPDATED]: Frontline Briefing
- Attachment: Understanding and supporting parent/carer bonding before birth and in infancy: Frontline Chart
- Violence in young people's relationships: Frontline Briefing
- Assessing parents' capacity to change: Frontline Briefing
- Team-based learning - assessing parental capacity to change
- Assessing risk of further child maltreatment - a research-based approach: Practice Tool
- Working effectively with men in families: Learning event 14 Sep, 2016
- Adult attachment recorded expert webinar
- Capacity to change recorded expert webinar
- Pre-birth assessment recorded expert webinar
- Assessing parental capacity to change: In-house workshop
- Undertaking parenting assessments: In-house workshop
Resources this month

- In support of the launch of their infant mental health campaign, the NSPCC has published:
  - Looking after infant mental health: our case for change
  - Case studies which describe the New Orleans Intervention model, Pause, The Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC), The Children’s House and Parents Under Pressure
  - Transforming mental health services for children who have experienced abuse (NSPCC)
  - Preventing youth offending briefings: Realising Ambition publishes its third and fourth Programme Insights
- The NAO has produced two free resources setting out the main findings of its recent reports on children in care and care leavers:
  - The first is designed for DCSs, and other colleagues in children’s services, as well as councillors
  - The second is a child-friendly summary of the same material
- The impact of unproven allegations on foster carers: webinar by the Rees Centre, 11 July, 4pm
- A report about access to and use of advocacy by children in care, and also those in the secure estate and mental health facilities, by the Children’s Commissioner
- Action Research into Improvement in Local Children’s Services by the ISOS partnership
- A summary of what Ofsted inspectors will do, what they need to see and how to prepare for local authorities judged ‘inadequate’
- MindEd for Families is an interactive online resource offering evidence-based advice and information for families with children in crisis

Articles and Summaries

“Black Teenage Mothers’ Understandings of the Effects of Maltreatment on their Coping style and Parenting Practice: A Pilot Study” (2016)

The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe and women of African Caribbean descent have higher rates than other groups. Currently, the experiences of this group and particularly the lasting effects of maltreatment on their parenting capacity are little understood. This article reports on a pilot study exploring how Black teenage mothers made sense of how past maltreatment impacts their lives and their parenting. Interviews were conducted with ten mothers between the ages of 14–18 in one English region. All had experienced maltreatment; none were in contact with social workers. Three key themes emerged.

Mothers’ coping strategy

Motherhood formed a core part of these women’s identities and all felt that it was a positive experience though participants struggled to articulate how childhood maltreatment may affect their development and parenting. All had experienced abuse or neglect from parents, carers or boyfriends but had difficulty
describing their feelings about these experiences, tending to present as emotionally detached: ‘I don’t think it affected me in any way’.

The authors suggest reasons for this might include:

- The challenges of grappling with early motherhood while simultaneously transitioning to adulthood.
- Current adversities making it difficult to reflect upon recent abusive childhoods, leading to their minimising their experiences/adopting avoidant behaviours.
- Not wanting to seem vulnerable.
- Absence of nurturing relationships with their own mothers resulting in participants learning to suppress their feelings.

The way participants narrated their experiences of maltreatment suggested that childhood maltreatment alongside difficult present circumstances appeared to be diminishing mothers’ capacities to articulate their own feelings. These women may therefore be dealing with the effects of abuse in silence, with major implications for their psychological well-being.

**Vulnerabilities to relationship abuse and compounding factors**

The circumstances in which participants lived significantly impacted the development of parenting skills. Most of their intimate partner relationships were characterised by physical and sexual violence. Some found it difficult to name these experiences as abusive and, worryingly, tended to minimise/normalise their impact. Some described being deserving of a ‘good slap’ because of the way they had behaved. Thus, there was little evidence of a sense of entitlement to a healthy, respectful relationship. Seven of the participants had boyfriends or male relatives involved in gangs, bringing risks of revenge attacks on the teenage mothers themselves from rival gang members (eg Aldridge et al, 2011).

Since from an early age they had been exposed witnessing male-to-female domestic violence, these mothers’ abusive childhoods are likely to have increased their vulnerability to revictimisation (Coid et al, 2001; Cyr et al, 2006). Compounding factors include:

- Societal racism
- Little regard for the context of Black teen mothers’ lives when seeking to understand development of parenting skills
- Deficit-based constructions of teen mothers (Arai, 2009)
- Poverty
- Poor educational achievements

Several indicated that they had little outlet to work through these issues but perhaps due to the gang involvement of, and control exerted by, the men in their lives they were unanimously cautious about accessing helping services.

**Understandings of positive parenting**

Most participants struggled to describe positive parenting practices. While some were able to talk about physical aspects of parenting, few identified the importance of emotional aspects. Several had not been exposed to positive parenting models; however, some were aware that their living environment was not
favourable for positive parenting and some were able to articulate the kind of parents they did not want to become; for example:

I can’t remember mum ever cuddling us (siblings). It was always shouting and beatings. Personally, I would do things different when it comes to my child because I would want him to talk to me about things (participant, aged 18).

Participants had varied levels of engagement with support services. Those who were engaged were most positive about their parenting capabilities. For them, the parenting groups:

- Provided a supportive space to talk about the transition to motherhood
- Helped them to develop parenting skills

Many expressed ambivalence about support services’ help with parenting. Voluntary agencies accessed by mothers tended to focus on practical support with specific issues (eg sexual health or returning to education) and did not focus on providing safe space to speak about experience of maltreatment.

Conclusions

This small study describes Black teenage mothers grappling with a range of complex issues in silence. Practice implications for working with marginalised teen mothers with a history of maltreatment include:

- The need for empathic as well as practical parenting support to be able to talk about the impact of childhood experiences on parenting.
- Building relationships and fostering resilience through sustained engagement.
- Recognising existing resilience factors - these mothers managed daily adversity and showed strong commitment to their children and breaking the cycle of abuse.
- Taking an ecological approach to understanding mothers’ behaviours, avoiding individual-based explanations.

References


"Childhood sexual trauma and subsequent parenting beliefs and behaviours" (2015)

The parenting behaviour of people who have experienced childhood sexual trauma (CST) is not exclusively linked to that maltreatment. Nevertheless, survivors' ability to parent may be compromised when they have not been exposed to a positive parenting model (Trickett et al, 2011) and the confidence of survivors is often diminished, causing them to question their parenting ability (Sanders and Woolley, 2005).

The way that parents interact with children is linked to children's adjustment and development and so exploring the impact of CST on pivotal aspects of parenting such as maternal sensitivity and harsh intrusiveness may yield more useful results. Maternal sensitivity refers to a mother's attunement to her child and her ability to recognise and respond to cues (CST may lead to challenges for mothers, such as depression, and managing this for themselves may reduce their available resources for parenting). Harsh intrusive parenting is often characterised by strong discipline and parents emphasising compliance and goal achievement (CST has been linked to stronger methods of discipline perhaps due to mothers struggling with their own regulatory processes but indicators for harsh intrusive parenting are less clear). Boundary dissolution has also been linked with CST. Survivors of CST are more likely to form distorted relationships with their children where roles are sometimes reversed, and the mother looks to the child to have her care needs met. This can undermine the child's adjustment and development of independence (Alexander et al, 2000).

Other factors linked to parenting include relationships between couples and income. A stable marriage (Belsky, 1984) and higher levels of maternal education (Duncan and Magnuson, 2003) are linked to increased maternal sensitivity. McLoyd (1998) argues poverty reduces parents' psychological resources and leads to less effective parenting strategies such as coercive control. Given that CST has been linked to poorer outcomes in these areas it may be that subsequent parenting is contingent upon these factors rather than the CST itself.

This study considers how CST reported to have occurred at or before aged 14 affects females' observed parenting in the long-term. Differences between 105 women who reported CST and 99 women who didn't (but who shared otherwise similar backgrounds) were examined in relation to parenting efficacy, sensitive and harsh intrusive parenting and boundary dissolution. Data was collected via interviews, questionnaires, trauma history and videoed play with children. Then, the moderating effects of current income, maternal education and relationship stability were tested for as potential protective factors. The sample was taken from the longitudinal Family Life Project (FLP).

Findings

The study found no significant differences between the groups in terms of reported parental efficacy but did find differences across the three parenting behaviours measured through observation. The CST group had lower ratings of sensitivity and higher ratings of harsh intrusiveness in interactions with their child in tasks that may be cognitively or emotionally challenging and in which children may need more
support. They also had higher rates of boundary dissolution than the non-CST group, being more likely to assume a child-like role in interactions with their child.

When the potentially moderating effects of poverty, maternal education and relationship instability were tested for this provided further evidence that CST has long-term implications for parenting ability because these factors made no difference to the results. Thus, in keeping with earlier work, women who had experienced CST experienced challenges across multiple parenting domains when compared to women who had not experienced CST. These findings have important implications for interventions for mothers reporting CST and their children:

- Practitioners may want to address the trauma independent of the effects of eg poverty and relationship instability.
- Parenting interventions should address both social factors and history of trauma.

A significant aspect not considered here is whether the participants were first-time mothers. That is a challenge for most mothers and may be exacerbated for those who have experienced CST, so is an area for further research.

References


"Child protection fathers’ experiences of childhood, intimate partner violence and parenting" (2014)

Research on mothers in child protection (CP) families has revealed that they often have a history of childhood abuse. Research has also shown that a considerable proportion of child maltreatment co-occurs with intimate partner violence (IPV) towards the mother. However, there is a dearth of research on the childhood histories and IPV victimisation experiences of fathers in CP families.

To address this gap in the literature this mixed method study of 35 men participating in a parenting program in Australia investigated fathers’ childhood experiences, exposure to IPV and concern for their children’s safety. When considering the findings it is important to note that participants belong to a minority group of men who had agreed to attend a parenting intervention program. None had been convicted of child sexual abuse and all were screened for unresolved IPV, substance abuse and untreated mental health problems.

**Fathers’ childhood**

Of the study participants who discussed their childhood, 62 per cent had experienced abuse by a parent and half reported that they did not have any positive family role model for good parenting. Some participants described being ‘beaten’ as children, three disclosed having been sexually abused by male relatives, some had grown up with substance misusing parents and witnessed parental domestic violence. Therefore, many men in this study experienced abusive childhoods similar to those experienced by many CP mothers.

**Intimate partner violence**

Over 40 per cent of the participants reported IPV including severe acts of violence such as being struck by metal bars and being stabbed. There was evidence of more female-to-male than male-to-female IPV – this may reflect underreporting or reflect this particular sample. Mothers were described as perpetrators of both IPV and child abuse, for example:

*She was calling him [his son] a spastic and stuff like that. I said you don't dare do that… don't put him down…she'd end up calling me a spastic and then she'd hit him and she'd attack me and hit me, just defending my children…* (Colin)

Some participants recounted instances of reporting IPV but not being taken seriously because they were men, consistent with other studies (Hines et al, 2007; Migliaccio, 2002). Ten claimed they had been falsely accused of either IPV or child abuse, at least four of whom had had the charges cleared.

It is probable that these data do not represent the general CP fathers’ population due to the screening criteria for participation in the parenting programme. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that there may be an important minority of CP fathers whose partners are abusing both them and their children (Appel and Holden, 1998; Edleson, 1999).

**Fathers’ parenting concerns**
Like many CP mothers, many fathers in this study had been very concerned about the safety of their children and often acted as protectors. Some study participants offered to care for their children, others removed their children from the mother and some stayed with their children's mother in order to protect them even if the relationship was abusive:

*I didn't have anywhere to go... I thought it would have been very hard to try and leave with bags and the kids on my back.* (Adam)

Of the 20 participants who had children in out-of-home care when they initially contacted the fathers' program, for half the process of reunification had begun or was complete. Participants who said that they had a positive father role model were more likely to be reunified with their children. In contrast, there was little evidence of intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment in this sample. Some fathers who had experienced childhood maltreatment expressed commitment to breaking the cycle of abuse, saying, for example, 'I'm not going to be the way my father was' (Ben).

**Implications**

The findings suggest that there is an important minority of fathers within the CP system who have experienced abusive childhoods, IPV victimisation and concerns for their children's well-being, similar to many CP mothers. There are several implications for policy and practice:

- Fathers can be valuable resources for children, especially when children are at risk of harm from their mother. In instances of IPV and child maltreatment by mothers, all father figures should be assessed to determine if they are able to take full care of their children (Zanoni et al, 2013, 2014).
- Fathers may have experienced childhood trauma and therefore require support services to the same extent as CP mothers.
- Practitioners must recognise that fathers may be genuine victims of IPV, particularly if a mother is physically abusing her children. All victims of IPV should be emotionally supported and practically assisted to keep themselves and their children safe.

**References**


No to Violence (2011) Determining who is doing what to whom in family violence referrals. from
"I want to be better than you:’ lived experiences of intergenerational child maltreatment prevention among teenage mothers in and beyond foster care" (2016)

Elizabeth M Aparicio, Child and Family Social Work, DOI: 10.1111/cfs.12274

The effects of teenage motherhood are far-reaching. Mothers are more likely to drop out of school, be (and remain) single (Hoffman and Maynard, 2008); and experience post-natal depression (Clare and Leh, 2012). Additionally, outcomes for the children of teen mothers tend to be poorer than for other children including into adulthood.

In America, children of teenage parents are significantly overrepresented in the welfare system, being 2.2 times more likely to enter foster care than children of those who delayed motherhood until aged 20 or 21 (Hoffman, 2006), and pregnancy in foster care exceeds twice the national average of teenage mothers (Dworsky and Courtney, 2010).

An important line of inquiry is therefore what is working for teen mothers who have been in foster care themselves and are endeavouring to break the cycle of neglect with their own children, as this could inform development of support to help this group parent differently. This US-based study explores this topic via eighteen in-depth interviews with six teen mothers who had experienced foster care. All participants had experienced neglect, five were African-American and five had no stable home during their involvement. Two key themes emerged.

Treating children well/parenting differently and avoiding the system

All participants emphasised a desire to parent differently and this had a dual meaning: treating their children well and ensuring they never entered foster care. This conscious effort to break the cycle of neglect resulted in them having to make decisions not usually expected of teenagers. One mother said, “I have … to evaluate what [me and my son] both need … I make sure that he has his needs [met] before I have mine”. However, treating their children well appeared to provide an opportunity for participants to begin to overcome their childhood experiences of abuse and neglect, and they drew on these when making parenting choices, such as how to discipline, with one mother talking of her experience of being beaten, “Even though I feel like I’m a tape recording … I don’t hit him”.

Whilst the motivation to ‘live each day differently’ was thus a source of strength for participants it also stemmed from fear of their children being removed: “I don’t want my child in the system, that’s a big no-no.”. The authors suggest that it is extremely difficult not to do something without having an idea of what to do instead – participants’ ability to identify characteristics of a ‘good mother’ depended upon
positive experiences with their own mothers or other parental figures. They emphasised practical concerns such as making sure their children had ‘actual shoes’ rather than designer label shoes, which differs to mothers in the general population, whom research has shown are more concerned with managing other’s perceptions of their parenting than actually doing well.

**Reducing isolation and enhancing support**

Participants talked of the importance of gaining support from trusted others to discuss the impact of their childhood experiences and to provide another perspective on their parenting in order to ensure their children’s wellbeing. Some talked of counselling and others of the importance of open communication rather than simply trying to struggle alone or, perhaps, turning to substance misuse as a stress management strategy. Avoiding substances was particularly relevant to those whose parents had misused substances, with one participant avoiding pills of any kind, “I don’t want to be high in no type of way”. Not experimenting with substances as a teen was seen by some as a sacrifice, and may be an area in which these mothers need extra support.

The young mothers emphasised foster carers’ part in promoting open communication, particularly making themselves available or securing another source of support if the teen was uncomfortable talking to them. This requires foster carers to be attuned to moods in order to intervene at the right time, which needs significant investment in the relationship by carers who may often be faced with challenging behaviour from placed children. The authors suggest this could be facilitated via foster carer training and support, encouraging carers to remain engaged.

Experience of therapy was mixed, and not aided by barriers of stigma, chaotic home lives and lack of availability of some alternative therapies such as art therapy, but resources such as parenting classes were helpful for both reducing isolation and promoting positive parenting behaviours. The taught strategy of taking brief time-outs for oneself during the day was viewed as particularly useful.

**References**


Parliamentary Business

Children and Social Work Bill

The government's Children and Social Work Bill (see RPU 183) 'continues a worrying trend in which Parliament is asked to agree legislation that is lacking in crucial details that allow it properly to scrutinise government proposals', the Chair of the House of Lords Constitution Committee has said.

The committee's report, which was launched ahead of the Bill's second reading in mid-June, urged peers to consider whether the detail of plans for a new regulator of social workers was not properly a matter for Parliament and should be 'detailed to some degree on the face of the Bill' rather than left to regulations. The report says: 'We would expect the creation of a significant statutory body, such as a regulator, to be enacted by primary legislative provision to enable proper parliamentary scrutiny.'

The report also criticises the Bill's proposals to allow ministers to create new criminal offences by regulation. 'The Committee asks the House to consider how it can be expected to scrutinise the creation of criminal offences when not only are the offences currently undefined, but they relate to other aspects of the Bill which are also undefined and left to the discretion of ministers.'

During the Bill's second reading on 14 June, in which Labour spokesperson Lord Watson of Invergowrie described the Bill as another 'skeleton Bill', former Chair of the Youth Justice Board Lord Warner said it was 'something of a ragbag of a Bill'. Lord Warner, who is also a former Director of Social Services, said his main concern was that the Bill 'gives very wide powers to the Secretary of State to totally reshape social worker regulation and professional development'. The government's plans are 'ill-thought through' when the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) 'has done and is doing rather a good job'.

The Bill is in Committee Stage until 4 July.

Editorial note: On 27 June, the Department for Education and Department of Health published a joint 'policy statement' outlining for MPs and peers the government's plans for a new government executive agency that will take over the role of social work regulation from the HCPC.


Automatic Electoral Registration (School Students) Bill

This Private Member's Bill would require that every school student automatically be placed on the electoral register as soon as they reach their 16th birthday. The Bill was introduced in the House of Lords in June by Liberal Democrat peer Lord Roberts.

further info
Child Contact Centres (Accreditation) Bill

This Private Member’s Bill, which has been introduced in the House of Lords by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering, would amend the Children Act 2004 to place a duty on local authorities to ensure that all facilities used for child contact are accredited by the National Association of Child Contact Centres.

The Bill’s first reading was on 6 June. This stage is a formality. The Bill’s second reading is yet to be scheduled.

further info

Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Bill

Eilidh Whiteford (SNP, Banff and Buchan) has introduced a Private Member’s Bill that would require the United Kingdom to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention – see RPU 169).

The government signed the Convention in 2012 but has yet to ratify it.

further info

Teacher Training (Special Educational Needs) Bill

Lord Addington has introduced a Private Member’s Bill that would require the Secretary of State to publish statutory guidance for accredited initial teacher training providers on their role in developing trainee teachers’ knowledge and understanding of special educational needs.

Specifically, the guidance would require providers to ensure that the ‘content, structure, delivery and assessment’ of initial teacher training programmes provide trainee teachers with:

- an awareness of ‘basic child development or psychology’
- an awareness and understanding of ‘commonly occurring learning disabilities’, so that they are able to support students and make judgements on when specialist help is required
- and ‘an awareness that students may have learning disabilities with which they are unfamiliar’.

Lord Addington is President of the British Dyslexia Association.

further info
Consultations

Compatibility of government bills with human rights law: Call for evidence

The Joint Committee on Human Rights, which scrutinises every Government Bill for its compatibility with the requirements of human rights law, has issued a call for evidence to inform its scrutiny during the current Parliamentary session.

- The committee is proposing to focus its legislative scrutiny on four Bills. These include the Counter Extremism and Safeguarding Bill, which will give law enforcement agencies new powers to protect vulnerable people, including children, from ‘those who seek to brainwash them with extremism propaganda’ (see RPU 183). The other three Bills are: Investigatory Powers Bill; Policing and Crime Bill; Prison and Courts Reform Bill.

- However, the committee considers that ‘some significant human rights issues’ may also arise in relation to the Children and Social Work Bill (see RPU 183). Submissions are invited on ‘any significant human rights issues raised or likely to be raised’ by any of the Bills identified by the committee, including whether a Bill ‘could do more to enhance the protection of human rights’.

- Short submissions drawing the committee’s attention to human rights issues raised by any other Bills in the government’s legislative programme are also welcome.

further info

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Draft scope for update of NICE guideline

NICE is consulting on a draft scope for updating its guidance on treatment and support for children, young people and adults with (or at risk of) post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The existing guideline, which was first issued in 2005, will be fully updated. This will include the principles of care for all people with PTSD, guidance relating to psychological and psychosocial interventions, support for families and carers, and care for people with coexisting conditions.

Among those questions to be considered during the review process is whether the provision of specific psychological or psychosocial interventions for children and young people within three months of a traumatic event is likely to result in a clinically important reduction in symptoms or prevention of PTSD.

The consultation document notes that PTSD in children can result from neglect or mistreatment in the home but is often under-diagnosed. In particular, symptoms such as sleep difficulties in fact may be undiagnosed PTSD. The updated guideline is currently scheduled for publication in August 2018.

Consultation ends 5 July

further info
**MPs launch inquiry into Sharia councils**

The Home Affairs Committee is inviting submissions of written evidence to inform its new inquiry into Sharia councils operating in the UK.

MPs will examine the services offered by Sharia councils and the reasons why they exist. They will also consider ‘the basic tenets’ of Sharia law with reference to family, divorce, domestic violence and children ‘and how those compare to the same in British law’.

The committee will look at the role of Sharia councils in comparison to similar institutions for other faiths, consider ‘the extent to which Sharia councils might discriminate against women’, and examine the role that government has (or could have) in ‘overseeing or monitoring’ Sharia councils.

Committee chair Keith Vaz MP said the committee had launched the inquiry into Sharia courts ‘following much uncertainty regarding their role within communities in the UK’. **Deadline for submissions 20 July**

**Editorial note**: At the end of May, the [Home Secretary announced](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-sharia-review) she had asked Professor Mona Siddiqui to lead an independent review into the application of Sharia law in England and Wales. The review will explore whether (and to what extent) the application of Sharia law may be incompatible with British law and will examine ways in which Sharia ‘may be being misused, or exploited, in a way that may discriminate against certain groups, undermine shared values and cause social harms’. The panel is expected to complete its review in 2017.

[进一步信息](#)

**Carers’ Strategy: Call for evidence**

The Department of Health has issued a call for evidence to inform development of a new carers’ strategy.

The call includes an online questionnaire aimed at carers (including young carers), those who are cared for, social workers, NHS staff and other practitioners who support carers.

The questionnaire sets out a number of questions specific to young carers. These cover services and other types of formal support, how important it is for formal support to improve in the future, and whether there are ‘specific ways of supporting young carers to have a life outside caring’ that respondents have found helpful. **Consultation ends 31 July**

[进一步信息](#)
Future of social care inspection

Ofsted is seeking views on its proposals for the future of social care inspections.

Specifically, the consultation covers:

• The approach for a proposed new programme of inspections local authority children’s services from 2018, once Ofsted has completed its inspections in local authorities under the single inspection framework (SIF). Assessment under SIF will provide ‘an effective starting point’ for the transition to ‘a more risk-based and proportionate’ programme of inspections. (Ofsted intends to consult later this year on ‘a more detailed inspection framework and methodology’.)

• A common inspection framework for social care settings (SCCIF), including inspections of independent fostering agencies (IFAs).

1. Inspections of local authority children’s services

Ofsted is proposing a new programme of shorter and more focused inspections, with fieldwork for full judgement inspections lasting no longer than two weeks (rather than four weeks under the SIF). The main points are:

• All local authorities that ‘require improvement’ to be ‘good’ will receive a full judgement inspection within three years of their last inspection. Fieldwork will last no longer than two weeks. In the interim, local authorities will also receive shorter ‘modular inspections’ (these are likely to last only a few days – see below) in areas where performance may be weaker.

• ‘Good’ and ‘outstanding’ local authorities will also receive a judgement inspection within three years, but these will be shorter than for authorities that ‘require improvement’. Fieldwork will last no longer than a week. Where concerns arise during the interim years, Ofsted may decide to carry out a modular inspection to identify any steps needed to maintain a good or better service.

• For local authorities that have been judged inadequate, Ofsted will use the monitoring arrangements published in May (see RPU 183) that involve quarterly monitoring visits. (Once an authority ceases to be ‘inadequate’, it will become subject to the arrangements involving modular and judgement inspections.)

• Modular inspections will last two to three days. The aim will be to check that the quality of a service is being maintained or to support improvement. Ofsted is proposing three modules – (i) children in need of help and protection, (ii) achieving permanence for looked after children, and (iii) care leavers – but respondents are asked to identify other potential areas for modular inspection. Modular inspections will result in a narrative report (rather than a graded judgement) setting out strengths and areas for improvement.

• Local authorities will also be expected to share their self-evaluations of practice with Ofsted every year. Self-evaluations should outline what the local authority knows about the quality of its frontline social work practice, how it knows this, what the local authority’s strengths are and its priorities for improvement. Self-evaluations may be used to inform Ofsted’s inspection programme, including when an inspection is undertaken and the focus of any modular inspections.
2. Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF)

From April 2017 Ofsted is proposing to implement a common inspection framework for children’s homes (including secure children’s homes), independent fostering agencies (see below), voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies, residential family centres, residential holiday schemes and residential special schools. This consultation invites views on the overall approach; Ofsted intends to consult on the detail of specific evaluation criteria for each type of setting later this year. The main points are:

- Ofsted will streamline current guidance for inspectors into a consolidated inspection handbook. This will contain guidance common to all settings and, where necessary, specific guidance for each type of setting or agency.
- Inspections will have a clear focus on evaluating the experiences and progress of children through case tracking and sampling. Inspectors ‘will spend less time looking at policies and procedures and more time looking at the impact of settings on children’s lives’.
- Inspectors will use the four-point scale to make a judgement on ‘overall experiences and progress of children’, taking into account ‘how well children are helped and protected’, and ‘the effectiveness of leaders and managers’. (‘How well children are helped and protected’ will be a limiting judgement; this means that if inspectors judge this area inadequate, the overall ‘experiences and progress of children’ judgement will be ‘inadequate’.)

3. Inspections of independent fostering agencies (IFAs)

Currently, IFAs are inspected at least once every three years. Ofsted is proposing to make inspection of IFAs ‘more proportionate’ and to incorporate the proposed changes into the SCCIF. The main points are:

- Ofsted will return to agencies that are judged ‘inadequate’ within six to 12 months. Where an IFA is found to ‘require improvement’, Ofsted proposes to return within 12 to 18 months.
- Where an IFA has been judged ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ for at least two consecutive inspections, Ofsted may wait longer than three years before the next inspection.
- Ofsted is proposing to incorporate inspections of IFAs within the SCCIF (see above) so inspectors will use the same four-point scale to make a judgement based on ‘overall experiences and progress of children’. This will replace the current judgement structure for IFAs.

Consultation ends 9 September

further info
Reports and Reviews

Howard League publishes briefing on the Carlile Inquiry 10 years on

Most children in custody are still being held in ‘institutions where restraint is routinely used to get children to do as they are told’, ten years after the Carlile Inquiry recommended restraint should never be used as a punishment to secure compliance, the Howard League has said.

The Howard League has launched a briefing to mark the tenth anniversary of Lord Carlile’s independent inquiry into the use of restraint, solitary confinement and strip-searching in penal institutions housing children. Despite a fall in the number of children detained from nearly 3,000 ten years ago to fewer than 1,000 today, the briefing says the rate of use of restraint per 100 children has more than doubled in the last five years. Between 2011 and 2015 more than 4,000 children suffered injuries while being subject to restraint.

While restraint to secure compliance has been banned in privately run Secure Training Centres since the Court of Appeal ruled in 2008 that the use of force in STCs fell within the legal prohibition on the use of ‘cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment’, the briefing argues that rules allowing the use of force to secure compliance in young offender institutions ‘are equally unlawful’.

The briefing also argues that the ‘current crisis in children’s prisons’ has given rise to ‘widespread practice of holding children in conditions of solitary confinement on main prison wings, locked in their cells for 23 hours a day’. Moreover, conditions in segregation units have not improved since 2006, when the Carlile Inquiry described them as ‘little more than bare, dark and dank cells that exacerbate underlying risks and vulnerabilities’.

While the number of ‘split-site institutions’ (ie, which detain adults and children separately but on the same site) has fallen from nine in 2006 to two, those reductions have given rise to further challenges. ‘Children are now held further away from home and many of the small, local secure units, highlighted by the inquiry as providing the best care and support for children, have been closed in order to make financial savings.’ There are no secure children’s homes in London, the wider South East or the East of England.

The Howard League is calling for the immediate closure of all segregation units. It also wants the Ministry of Justice to ‘ban the unlawful use of restraint on children simply in order to get them to do as they are told’. And it is calling for action to tackle the over-representation of BME children among young detainees.

How Safe Are Our Children? NSPCC’s state of the nation report

The NSPCC has published its fourth annual ‘state of the nation’ report on child protection in the UK. The report provides detailed data against 20 indicators, including the number of recorded sexual
offences against children, the number of recorded cruelty and neglect offences, violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15-year-olds, referrals to social services, how long children are subject to child protection plans or the child protection register, child suicides, child trafficking and public attitudes to abuse and neglect.

In his introduction to the report, NSPCC Chief Executive Peter Wanless says it is striking that suicide rates among young people in England have started to rise after more than a decade in decline. 'This year has also seen the highest number of sexual offences against children reported to the police in the past decade.' Overall, police recorded child sexual offences against under-18s have risen 76 per cent across the UK over the last four years, while cruelty and neglect offences have risen 26 per cent.

further info

Independent advocacy for children in care

While some local authorities are providing high-quality accessible advocacy services for children in care, the overall picture is one of ‘wide variation’ across the country with children in different parts of the country getting different levels of support, according to a new report by the Children's Commissioner.

Almost all local authorities provide advocacy services for looked after children and 90 per cent provide advocacy for care leavers. However, the Commissioner notes that only a minority of children (10%) are currently making use of those services. A particular concern is the low number of disabled children using advocates. Only six out of ten (61%) local authorities provide advocacy to disabled children in receipt of services and four out of ten (41%) provide no access to non-instructed advocacy for younger children.

The report is based on the findings of a survey of advocacy providers, in-depth research with a small number of services, discussions with advocates, commissioners and young people using advocacy services, as well as information obtained through the Commissioner’s national survey of children in care.

The report highlights that more than half (55%) of respondents to the Children’s Commissioner’s national survey of children in care did not know how to (or were unsure how to) get an advocate.

Recommendations include:

• **National standards**: Standards on advocacy should be reviewed as part of the government’s strategy for reforming children's social care (see RPU 179) and improving outcomes for children in care.

• **What works**: The government should produce guidance on what works in delivering high-quality advocacy, including best practice on commissioning.

• **Inspections**: Ofsted should include advocacy services for children in care as part of its framework for inspection of local authority children's services.

• **Awareness**: Local authorities and mental health service providers should ensure all children in care are aware of their entitlement to advocacy and know how to access it.

• **Monitoring take-up**: Local authorities should monitor take-up of advocacy, in particular to
ensure those groups who are currently least likely to use advocacy services – younger children, disabled children and children placed out of area – get the support they need.

- **Mental health settings**: NHS England should work alongside the Department for Education and Department of Health to determine how best to collect and collate information about access to advocacy for children in mental health settings.

The report has been published alongside [new research](#) commissioned by the Children’s Commissioner looking at impact and outcomes for independent advocacy. The research, by the University of Central Lancashire and the National Children’s Bureau, included a survey of advocacy providers and a detailed study of six advocacy services (including, in each case, focus group discussions with advocates, commissioners, and young people using advocacy services).

The researchers found that understanding and constructions of outcomes ‘varied widely across sites, between groups (advocates, stakeholders and young people) and between individuals’. Outcomes could broadly be divided into those related to practical results, those related to young people being heard, and those related to personal growth and development.

While there was wide agreement, especially among advocates and their managers, on the importance of recording outcomes for the purpose of reviewing service effectiveness, a ‘striking finding’ was that commissioners in most sites ‘were not prescriptive about how outcomes should be recorded’; rather, they focused their reporting requirements on outputs.

**Mental health reforms not taking account of abuse and neglect, says NSPCC**

The needs of children who have experienced abuse or neglect are not explicitly or adequately recognised in many Local Transformation Plans for improving children’s mental health, according to the NSPCC.

The NSPCC has carried out an analysis of 117 Local Transformation Plans, which have been drawn up by Clinical Commissioning Groups to take forward the government’s vision for improved child and adolescent mental health services (see [RPU 169](#) and [RPU 180](#)). Only 14 per cent of plans contained ‘an adequate assessment of abused and neglected children’ and one third fail to mention the needs of children who have experienced neglect or abuse at all.

The NSPCC’s analysis did, however, identify ‘a small number of very promising plans' that address the specific needs of abused and neglected children. Examples of best practice include: recognition that abuse is a major risk factor for poor mental health; needs assessments that go beyond a narrow focus on clinical disorders; and a commitment to addressing non-diagnosable mental health concerns following traumatic life events, such as abuse.

The NSPCC says these examples of best practice should be used to help support improvements when plans are reviewed for 2017-18. Good plans should also:
• contain a baseline assessment of where they are starting from and an assessment of needs informed by the risk factors that impact on mental health
• ‘articulate a vision’ of where they are trying to get to over the coming years
• be clear and transparent and enable accountability – specifically, they should identify gaps in services and set out ambitions to evolve current services.

further info

MPs publish report on prostitution

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee has published an interim report arising from its first ever inquiry into prostitution.

The report calls on the Home Office to change existing legislation ‘immediately’ so that ‘soliciting is no longer an offence’. However, the ability to prosecute those who use brothels to control or exploit ‘sex workers’ must be maintained: ‘There must be zero tolerance of the organised criminal exploitation of sex workers.’ The committee will continue to consider the potential merits of a ‘sex buyer law’, which places the burden of criminality on those ‘buying sex’, and intends to publish a final report later in the Parliament. (The committee is not yet convinced such a law would be effective in reducing demand or improving the lives of sex workers.)

In its report, the committee also expresses its support for the Children Society’s recommendation that the government should develop guidance for the police and local authorities on how to meet the needs of young people identified as having been victims of, or at risk of, child sexual exploitation before they turned 18. This should include guidance for the police on how to respond to young adults ‘who are found to be offering sexual services in the community or online, especially if they have been formerly known as young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, to ensure that they receive the support they need’.

The report also urges the government to consider ‘how changes to legislation and policies relating to the sex industry might better support the prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation’. While it is too early to make a proper assessment of the impact of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 on levels of trafficking, it is clear that it is ‘very difficult to identify victims, to gain their confidence and to put together the necessary evidence for successful prosecutions’.

further info
Ofsted emphasises value of research-led practice in its social care annual report

In its third dedicated annual report on children’s social care in England, Ofsted emphasises the importance of local authority leadership and the benefits of research-led practice.

The report says inspection evidence shows ‘it is the quality of leadership in a local authority that makes all the difference’ (see RPU 184). In the best local authority areas, Ofsted says local political leaders prioritise children’s services, provide a high level of support and scrutiny to senior managers and social workers, demonstrate high levels of ambition for children and young people, and show ‘a willingness to take difficult decisions and support ambitious proposals for service improvement’.

Leaders in the best local authorities have also developed ‘ambitious and innovative approaches to practice that are firmly grounded in sound research’. Ofsted says research-led ideas can have ‘a transformative effect’ on children, young people and their families ‘when staff are supported to deliver them and leaders critically assess their impact’.

Ofsted has now inspected 57 per cent of local authorities under its single inspection framework (see RPU 184) and says it is ‘not necessarily’ greater affluence or a higher financial settlement that drives performance. Higher-performing local authorities spend their money more effectively, invest in the best services and are able to bring costs down. ‘The evidence from inspection suggests that investment in early help is associated with stronger outcomes for children. Local authorities that were effective in their investment strategies had clear systems in place to assess the impact of every initiative. Leaders in these local authorities made decisions to invest in, and reduce spending on, programmes based on what was shown to work.’

further info

Report calls for a public health approach to mental health

The Faculty of Public Health has published a new report which makes the case for a public health approach to mental health.

The report, which was commissioned from the Mental Health Foundation and supported by Public Health England, is intended primarily as a resource to help public health practitioners develop their knowledge and skills in public mental health. It emphasises the importance of family relationships and highlights that over three-quarters of all mental health problems emerge by age 20. It covers approaches and interventions at different life stages and in different settings.

The report also urges public health practitioners to become advocates for public mental health by providing ‘strong leadership and prioritising mental health within current public health practice’. Practitioners should move from deficit to strengths-based approaches wherever possible, adopt a ‘proportionate universalism approach’ (including universal interventions to promote wellbeing across whole populations, with targeted interventions for specific groups) and adopt a life-course approach complemented by place-based interventions in schools and other settings.
Ministers announce 'Staying Closer' pilots as Martin Narey publishes his review of residential care

Ministers have announced plans to pilot a new ‘Staying Close’ scheme to support young people leaving residential care, as an ‘alternative’ to the Staying Put arrangements in place for young people in foster care.

The scheme is one of the recommendations made by Sir Martin Narey in his independent review of children's residential care, which was published on 4 July. Under the scheme, young people leaving residential care would live independently but be guaranteed ongoing support for three years up to age 21. They would live ‘very close’ to their former children's home, be able to visit it frequently and continue to receive the support of a key worker. The Staying Close scheme was one of four options identified in a National Children’s Bureau-led study published 18 months ago (see RPU 167).

In his report, Sir Martin says children's homes continue to be seen by many social work professionals, including senior managers, as 'a last resort’ – ‘perhaps somewhere to park children temporarily, until a crisis has passed'. However, while the ‘dramatic shift’ in recent decades towards far greater use of fostering and the marked reduction in the use of children's homes is broadly welcome, Sir Martin sees ‘very little scope for reducing our reliance on children's homes' and is ‘quite clear that to do so would not be in the interests of children'. In particular, ‘there is a very real and unmet demand for the greater use of children's homes as part of an initial assessment for older children when first coming into care, and for those on the edge of care’.

As well as recommending the Staying Close scheme, the report calls on the Department for Education to set up a new Residential Care Leadership Board to ‘bring some leadership to the sector’. The Board would report to the Minister for Children and its membership would comprise local authority, voluntary and private sector providers, academics, commissioners and ‘other experts'.

The Board could lead work on improving commissioning and obtaining better value for money for local authorities, and advise ministers on planning issues and the role of and future demand for secure care. It could also advise on reducing unnecessary criminalisation, managing behavior, best practice in recruitment and how to implement Staying Close. Sir Martin says such a Board has the potential to ‘remove much of the suspicion and mistrust in the residential care world, improve best practice, and bring greater clarity and coherence to this much misunderstood and grossly under appreciated part of children's social care’.

The report makes 32 other recommendations, including:

- **Location**: Local authorities and commissioning consortia should recognise that ‘the right placement for a child is more important than location' and should no longer impose geographical restrictions on where homes must be located.

- **Size**: Commissioners should not assume smaller homes are likely to be more effective. ‘The evidence does not support that assumption and Ofsted have made it clear that they do not have...
a preference for smaller homes'.

- The Department for Education and Department for Communities and Local Government should examine to what extent current interpretation of planning law is leading to ‘a proliferation of newer smaller homes’ that will be more expensive yet unlikely to be more effective than larger units.

- **Secure accommodation**: The Department should lead a debate with the sector about ‘the role and purpose’ of secure accommodation and ‘what it can achieve in keeping exceptionally challenging children safe’.

- **Criminalisation**: The Department for Education and the Home Office should ‘urge’ other police services and local authorities to replicate the ‘south-east protocol’ (which covers ten local authorities and four police services) with the aim of reducing the number of prosecutions of children in care.

- **Restraint**: The Department for Education should reconsider its guidance to ensure staff are able to keep children safe by preventing them leaving homes at times of danger, ‘either by locking doors or using restraint’.

- **‘Hub’ approach (No Wrong Door)**: The Department for Education should encourage other local authorities to study the ‘hub’ approach adopted in North Yorkshire, where two homes act as hubs providing a range of types of placement, including emergency beds, community foster family placements, supported accommodation and supported lodgings with outreach support. Children often move from one type of placement to another but each adolescent has one key worker who works with him or her throughout

- **Ofsted**: Ofsted should no longer only encourage authorities to place children only in ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ homes, and commissioners should abandon ‘blanket policies that rule out placements in homes which are, essentially, satisfactory’. Ofsted should also clarify – ‘very loudly’ – the ‘reality that a “requires improvement” home is an adequate home’.

- **Staffing**: The Department for Education should consider how the expectation that homes should be managed by qualified social workers can be established. The Department should also move swiftly to ensure that ‘as many social work students as possible’ spend some of their 200 days’ placement experience in a children’s home.

- However, Ministers should not follow the example of Scotland, which intends to make it a requirement that all staff in children’s homes are graduates from 2018.

**Editorial note**: The government’s plans to pilot a Staying Close scheme are set out in a [ministerial statement](http://example.com) and in a new policy document [Putting Children First](http://example.com), which builds on the government’s proposals for social care reform published earlier this year (see [RPU 179](http://example.com)). The government will respond more fully to Sir Martin’s report in the autumn.

[Further info](http://example.com)
Initiatives and Guidance

Alliance for Children in Care calls for a ‘fundamental shift’ in the purpose of care

The Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers has set out a new vision for children and young people leaving care. Specifically, it is calling for a fundamental shift that recognises the primary purpose of care as being to support children and young people to recover from the trauma of abuse and neglect.

The Alliance, which comprises 24 organisations including the Family Rights Group, TACT, The Fostering Network and The Who Cares? Trust, as well as the Children’s Commissioner and the British Association of Social Workers, wants to see:

1. A statement in law that the principal aim of the care system for children and young people who remain in care is to achieve recovery and healing from past harm, and promote resilience and emotional wellbeing.

2. A new child-led outcomes framework for looked after children so that meeting the principal aim is properly assessed and judged.

These two measures would help ‘support improvements in the system where they are most needed’.

- **Support and training for primary carers and key workers in children’s homes.** The government should review the provision of training and therapeutic support for carers to help them understand and address the needs children at every stage of their development. This should lead to ‘sustainable improvement’ in availability of high-quality training, including access to joint training for carers, social workers, teachers and health practitioners.

- **Mechanisms for assessing quality of care from the child’s perspective.** The government should:
  - measure and report annually on looked after children and care leavers’ wellbeing (including clinically validated measures and subjective measures based on children’s own views about how their lives are going)
  - undertake longitudinal analyses to identify the effectiveness of care in improving looked after children’s outcomes over time. This should include improved use of the SDQ to assess mental health difficulties and help drive service development, strategy and commissioning.

- **Care that meets day-to-day emotional needs, with timely access to specialist mental health support if needed.** The government should:
  - require every Clinical Commissioning Group (CGC) to appoint a lead clinician to coordinate support for looked after children’s mental health (similar to the role of the Virtual School Head in education)
  - introduce a statutory requirement for CGCs to share corporate parenting responsibilities with local authorities to ensure that ‘a spectrum of accessible, evidence-based
therapeutic services is provided, and the mental health and wellbeing needs of all children in care are routinely met in care plans’.

- **Continued support when young people leave care** so they are not expected to become independent earlier than their peers. Specifically, the government should:
  - ensure all care leavers have a personal advisor until age 25, whether or not they are in education or training
  - ensure all care leavers can access CAMHS until age 25 ‘unless their individual needs are better met by adult mental health services’.

  [further info]

**FGM risk and safeguarding: Guidance for health professionals**

The Department of Health has published practice guidance to support NHS organisations when developing or reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures around female genital mutilation (FGM).

The guidance, which has been developed in partnership with health and social care professionals and professional bodies, is aimed at health professionals from all sectors – in particular, designated and named safeguarding leads, LSCB members and all those involved in child protection and safeguarding arrangements. It is supplementary to the multiagency statutory guidance issued earlier this year (see [RPU 181](http://www.rip.org.uk)).

The 40-page [guidance](http://www.rip.org.uk) includes a risk assessment framework tool to help health professionals know the type of risk to look for and the specific factors most likely to affect families with girls at risk of FGM. The guidance is accompanied by an [FGM safeguarding pathway](http://www.rip.org.uk), which includes making referrals to children’s social care.

  [further info]

**International terminology guidelines for the protection of children**

ECPAT, the children’s rights charity which campaigns to stop transnational child sexual abuse and child trafficking, has published terminology guidelines to help strengthen the global response to child sexual exploitation.

The Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (otherwise known as the [Luxembourg Guidelines](http://www.rip.org.uk)) aim to foster consensus among stakeholders on terminology relating to child sexual exploitation. They are intended for use in policy documents, programming, legislation, advocacy and communications, and aim to strengthen data collection and cooperation across agencies, sectors and countries.

The Luxembourg Guidelines have been drawn up by the Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children, which is co-ordinated by ECPAT Luxembourg. They have been agreed by 18
international organisations, including UNICEF, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Save the Children International, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and INTERPOL.

The guidelines are being made available to child protection agencies and organisations around the world, as well as to lawmakers and the media.

further info

 Keeping children safe in education – statutory guidance

The Department for Education has published revised statutory guidance setting out what schools and colleges must do to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children. The updated guidance will come into force in September.

The NSPCC has also published an 11-page briefing for schools on the revised guidance. This highlights changes to the statutory guidance, including a new emphasis on the importance of ensuring early help (including the need for constant review and consideration of referral to children’s social care if a child’s situation is not improving), the need for staff to be aware of the possibility of peer on peer abuse (including ‘sexting’) and the importance of ensuring children’s online safety.

The briefing also highlights that the guidance has been reworded to emphasise the importance of professionals sharing information and updated to reflect the mandatory reporting of FGM.

further info

 Ofsted commentary on practice leadership in social care

Eleanor Schooling, Ofsted’s National Director of Social Care, has published a short briefing on what makes strong and effective leadership in children’s social care.

The briefing, which is published as part of the Chief Inspector’s ongoing series of monthly commentaries, says that while the qualities that make a successful children’s services leader are ‘not straightforward to define’, inspections nevertheless ‘show that they’re very obvious when present, and strikingly so when they aren’t’.

The briefing says that ‘like all good leaders’, the best social work practice leaders are ‘inspirational and influential’ as well as ‘energetic’ and ‘visible’, and ‘ensure they are surrounded by a strong team at every level’. They have ‘a deep knowledge and understanding of social work practice’, understand frontline pressures, ensure ‘the needs of children are put first and resources second’ and show commitment to overcoming the challenges in recruitment and retention.

Ms Schooling says leaders should also be prepared to ‘go into battle’ for children’s services. ‘In my view, there’s no place in this work for “corporate players”if this takes away from the resolute focus on children. The strongest leaders aren’t afraid to rock the boat. They don’t capitulate or appease those higher up in the chain.’
Good practice leaders also recognise a wider obligation to drive improvement beyond their own organisation, she says. Ms Schooling cites senior leaders in Leeds and in Kensington and Chelsea who have partnered other authorities rated ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted to help them improve.