

April 2021

Welcome to the **April 2021** of CoramBAAF's Adoption & Fostering Digest. This UK-wide digest contains the latest information on legislation, policy, consultations, research, statistics and online resources of interest to those working in the fields of adoption, fostering, kinship and child welfare.

All members of CoramBAAF are entitled to receive the monthly Digest emails (non-members can subscribe for an annual fee of £150), so if you find them useful please encourage colleagues to subscribe by contacting infodesk@corambaaf.org.uk. Members can also access the last 12 issues of the Digest in the [members' area of our website](#).

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CORAMBAAF'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

We are keeping our guidance on coronavirus under continuous review, and have published an additional note ('COVID-19 update') clarifying our approach to ensuring that it continues to be helpful and reflect current concerns. Below is the current list of CoramBAAF guidance (correct at 10 May 2021):

[Family Placement](#)

- How do we define "visits", "interviews" and "meetings" in relation to the law around fostering and adoption? (Version 2: 15 October 2020)
- Key issues for agencies in developing best practice for adoption and fostering panel virtual meetings during the coronavirus pandemic (Version 3: 9 December 2020)
- The impact of coronavirus on children and young people who were or are in care (Version 2: 11 August 2020)

[Fostering](#)

- Making arrangements for contact for children in care (Version 5: 18 November 2020)
- Public health measures and the placement of children in foster care (Version 4: 19 November 2020)
- Short breaks and COVID-19 (Version 3: 4 December 2020)
- Supervision and assessment of foster carer and prospective foster carer households (Version 4: 18 November 2020)

Adoption

- Managing introductions and the placement of children with their prospective adopters (Version 2: 15 October 2020)
- Obtaining court records for access to information and intermediary work during the COVID-19 pandemic (Version 1: 31 March 2020)

Family and Friends

- Kinship and COVID-19: Supporting children and carers in forming new family arrangements (Version 1: 2 December 2020)

Legal

- Obtaining court records for access to information and intermediary work during the COVID-19 pandemic (Version 1: 31 March 2020)
- Summary of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021 (as amended by The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps and Local Authority Enforcement Powers) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021) (Version 5: 12 April 2021)
- Unlawful placements, unregulated placements and 'other arrangements' (Version 1: 14 April 2020)

Health

- Adult medical reports in family placement guidance (Version 6: 3 February 2021) which has an associated form and an optional insert for the existing AH form:
- Escalation process for prospective adopters if GP declines to complete a medical report (Version 2: 29 October 2020)

These resources, plus links to external sources of information on coronavirus and details of how the coronavirus pandemic has affected our services, are all available on the CoramBAAF website.

NEW CONSULTATIONS & SURVEYS

Children's Commissioner: 'The Big Ask' Children's Consultation - England

On 19 April 2021 the Children's Commissioner for England launched the biggest ever consultation with children undertaken in England. 'The Big Ask' survey will run for one month and will ask children to set out their priorities for improving childhood post-Covid. The survey is open to any child who can access the internet and focus groups will be run to ensure the experiences of babies, pre-school children, and children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities are captured. There is also an adult survey for care leavers, parents or those who work with children.

Closing date: 19 May 2021

Further details and a link to the surveys for children and adults are on the [Children's Commissioner website](#).

NICE Guidance on Looked-after Children and Young People: Consultation - England

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is consulting on a draft guideline covering how organisations, professionals and carers can work together to deliver high quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships for looked-after children and young people. This guideline will fully update and replace NICE public health guideline 'Looked-after children and young people (PH28)', which was published in October 2010.

Closing date: 15 June 2021

The draft guideline, a series of Evidence Reviews and other connected documents including the report 'Creating our lives: A participatory study commissioned by NICE to explore looked after children and young people's perspectives on outcomes and interventions', are all provided on the [NICE website](#). The draft guidance is also discussed in a [NICE news item](#) published on 30 April 2021.

State of the Nation's Foster Care: 2021 Survey - UK

The Fostering Network has launched the 2021 State of the Nation's Foster Care survey, which seeks to assess the current state of fostering in the UK, and to identify the most important issues facing foster carers and the successes and challenges involved with fostering children and young people. This year a separate survey for fostering services has been created in order to collect further evidence and help inform and influence the foster care agenda at a local and national level.

Closing date: 11 July 2021

A link to the survey for foster carers and information about the accessing the fostering services version of the survey are provided on the [Fostering Network website](#).

REPORTS, PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

Amendments to Standard Public Law Orders: Message from Mr Justice Mostyn - England & Wales

A committee has recommended amendments to the standard public law orders following the publication of the report of the Public Law Working Group (PLWG). The amendments give effect to the recommendations of the PLWG and reflect the Guidance of the President on the Form of Orders in Children's Cases of 17 June 2019.

Details of the changes to orders 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 are on the [Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website](#).

Change Negative Attitudes to Improve Outcomes for Looked After Children - England

Serenity Welfare, an organisation providing humanistic and caring services for children and young people in care or on the edge of care, has published a report highlighting the impact of negative attitudes towards children and young people in the care system on both outcomes for young people and costs for children's services. The report sets out the financial case for changing these negative mind-sets and increasing the use of early intervention and mentoring for young people in the care system. The report also calls for an end to the use of secure transportation involving handcuffs or caged vehicles for vulnerable young people as part of Serenity Welfare's ongoing 'Hope instead of Handcuffs' campaign.

Information about the 'Hope instead of Handcuffs' campaign and a link to the 'Lives Transformed, Potential Fulfilled' report are provided on the [Serenity Welfare website](#). The potential financial benefits of early intervention are set out in a [separate news item](#) and Steve McCabe MP has written in [The House](#) about why he is supporting the campaign.

Children's Views on Being Reported Missing from Care - England

Missing People has published a new report from a consultation project with looked after or care experienced young people which looks at their views on being reported missing from care. 11 consultation sessions took place involving 27 children in the care of a local authority, who had been missing themselves in the past. Key findings include:

- Young people want carers, social workers, and the police to avoid making assumptions about them and why they might have gone missing.
- It is not inevitable that young people will go missing. Carers should genuinely attempt to mitigate any issues that may cause a young person to go missing.
- Young people do not want the police to automatically be contacted if they are not where they are supposed to be.
- Professionals should try to understand the unique challenges facing looked after children.

Further information and a link to download the report 'Children's views on being reported missing from care "Don't make me feel guilty or punish me, going missing might be how I cope when I can't ask for help"' are on the [Missing People website](#).

Clinical Review and Practice Guide: Emotional Wellbeing of Children in Care - UK

NHS South East Clinical Delivery and Networks has published a new clinical review and practice guide for all multi-professional staff working with children in care. The guide provides a practical overview of best evidenced practice in recognising, understanding, supporting and monitoring change in the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children in care.

The guide can be downloaded from the [NHS South East Clinical Delivery and Networks website](#).

Evaluation of the Bright Spots Programme - England

The Department of Education at the University of Oxford has published an evaluation report examining whether involvement in the Bright Spots Programme has contributed to changes in local authority policies and practice for children in care. The evaluation, which involved interviews with senior leaders and other professionals and focus groups with looked after children in six LAs in England, found that there was evidence to support claims of changes to policy and practice in the Bright Spots domains of relationships, resilience, rights, and recovery. The evaluation also showed that even when professionals knew about areas that needed improvement, the Bright Spots findings provided additional evidence that could be used to gain additional funding or to advocate for change.

Further details about the Bright Spots programme and a link to the evaluation report can be found on the [Department of Education, University of Oxford website](#).

IICSA: Child Sexual Abuse in Ethnic Minority Communities - England & Wales

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has published a new report on engagement with support services for ethnic minority communities. The report finds that

victims and survivors of child sexual abuse from ethnic minority communities do not trust the police or social care. Specific barriers include racism and lack of representation, recent or insecure immigration status and fear of breaking confidentiality. The report makes suggestions for change to statutory services including social care in order to build trust and improve access to services.

Further information and a link to the report are on the [IICSA website](#).

Intrafamilial Child Torture: A Distinct Category of Child Maltreatment - International

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) has published a policy report which makes the case for Intrafamilial Child Torture (ICT) to be treated as a distinct category of child maltreatment. ICT is torture inflicted on children by their parents or other caregivers. Accompanying the report is a case study of a child survivor of ICT.

Both documents can be downloaded from the [Center for Child Policy website](#).

Lonely Lockdown for Siblings of Disabled Children - UK

Sibs, a charity for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults has published a new report on the impact of the lockdowns and the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people growing up with a disabled brother or sister. The survey ran for 4 weeks in February 2021 and was completed by 640 parents. It found that:

- 81% of parents said their sibling child's mental health had worsened
- 43% of siblings were providing more care in lockdown
- 40% of young siblings were feeling isolated and missing support from family and friends

Further information and a link to the 'Lonely Lockdown' report are on the [Sibs website](#).

NSPCC Learning: Attachment and Child Development Briefing - UK

NSPCC Learning has published a briefing on attachment and child development which considers attachment theory and why it is important, stages of attachment, types of attachment, attachment issues, how trauma can affect attachment and supporting parents and carers to bond with their child.

The briefing is on the [NSPCC Learning website](#).

Parliament UK: Research Briefings - England & Wales

The House of Commons and House of Lords libraries have produced the following articles and research briefings relating to families and social services in April 2021:

- [Domestic Abuse Bill 2019-21: Progress of the Bill](#) - a paper providing full background to the Domestic Abuse Bill 2019-21 in advance of the Commons date (15 April) for consideration of the Lords amendments to the Bill.
- [Looked after children: out of area, unregulated and unregistered accommodation \(England\)](#) - a Commons Library briefing paper providing information on out of area placements for looked after children in England and on those in unregulated and unregistered accommodation.
- [Special Educational Needs: support in England](#) – a Commons Library briefing setting out the system of support for children and young people in England aged 0-25 with special educational needs (SEN) which was introduced in 2014.

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021: Lords Committee Raises Concerns over Six Month Extension of Relaxations - England

In its 51st Report of Session 2019–21, the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee of the House of Lords has drawn attention to the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (SI 2021/261), which extended by six months (until 30 September 2021) several relaxations of statutory requirements in relation to children's social care which were introduced earlier during the pandemic. The Committee's report notes that the Department for Education consulted on the further extension of these measures and recognises the need for flexibility as a result of the pandemic, but expresses concern about the length of the extension and concludes: "*We consider that a three-month extension may have been more appropriate, given the vulnerability of the children affected and the benefits of face-to-face contact, especially over the summer holidays. The House may wish to press the Minister for an assurance that the Department will make every effort to bring to an end the temporary relaxations and return to regular face-to-face visits and meetings at the earliest opportunity.*"

The relevant section of the report, which includes details of the measures extended by the Statutory Instrument, can be read on the [Parliament UK website](#).

The Long-term Impact of Family Conflict and Financial Strain in Childhood - UK

In an article published in The Conversation, a group of researchers discuss the findings of a study examining the long-term impact of adverse events in childhood. The study, which used data from 21 European countries, found that severe family conflict and financial strain during childhood had a long-term and cumulative impact on physical, mental and social health in adulthood, and that the impact was exacerbated if people had experienced both conflict and financial difficulties in childhood.

The article, which includes a link to the full text of a BMJ Global Health article on the study, can be read on [The Conversation website](#).

'The Right Way: Social Care' Children's Commissioner - Wales

The Children's Commissioner for Wales has developed a new guide for and with social care professionals. The third in a series, this guide aims to share the common approaches used by services when implementing the principles of a children's rights approach (grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) and includes advice and guidance from young people themselves.

The guide 'The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach for Social Care in Wales' is on the [Children's Commissioner for Wales website](#).

INSPECTION REPORTS & CASE REVIEWS

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: Children's Care Services Decisions: March-April 2021 - England

During March and April 2021 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) published new decision reports relating to the following subcategories of Children's care services:

- [Adoption](#): 3 decisions of which 1 was upheld, 1 was not upheld and 1 was closed after initial enquiries
- [Child Protection](#): 26 decisions, of which 6 were upheld, 3 were not upheld and 17 were closed after initial enquiries

- [Fostering](#): 2 decisions, of which 1 was not upheld and 1 was closed after initial enquiries
- [Friends and Family Carers](#): 3 decisions of which 1 was not upheld and 2 were closed after initial enquiries
- [Looked after children](#): 5 decisions of which 2 were upheld and 3 were closed after initial enquiries

Ofsted Inspection Reports: April 2021 - England

The following Ofsted reports were published in April 2021:

[Local Authorities](#)

- **Children's services focused visit:** Blackpool Borough Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

[Fostering](#)

- **Independent Fostering Services monitoring visit:** Action for Children Family Breaks Devon, Fostering Southwest Peninsula, Beta North Ltd trading as Evolve Fostering, Cfs Care Ltd, Five Rivers Fostering Service, Fostering Matters Ltd, Fostering Solutions Limited South, Fostering Together, Regional Foster Families Ltd (South West), Team Fostering

Adoption

- None this month

STATISTICS

ADCS Data on Directors of Children's Services - England

The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) has published information about the post holders of the statutory Directors of Children's Services (DCS) role in England in the year ending 31 March 2021. The analysis shows that there were 39 changes in DCS post-holder in 2020-21 and that at 31 March 2021 there were 26 'twin hat' directors holding statutory roles for both children's and adult services. The data also reveals that there were 91 LAs with female directors and 59 LAs with male directors, and that just 6% of directors of children's services are from black, Asian or ethnic minority groups.

The full report can be downloaded from the [ADCS website](#) and the figures are discussed in an article published in Community Care: ['White children's leaders 'must play bigger role' in tackling racial inequalities in management'](#).

Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board Quarterly Data Report: Q3 2020-21 - England

New data on the performance of the adoption system in Quarter 3 of 2020-21 (April to December 2020) has been published by the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB). The report, produced by Coram-i on behalf of the Department for Education, shows that as at 31 December 2020:

- 2710 Agency Decision Maker (ADM) decisions had been made (910 in Q1; 920 in Q2; 880 in Q3) - a decrease of 11% (340n) from Q3 2019/20

- 1980 placement orders (POs) had been granted (480 in Q1; 790 in Q2; 710 in Q3) - a decrease of 22% (570n) from Q3 2019/20
- 1930 adoption orders (AOs) had been granted (390 in Q1; 760 in Q2; 780 in Q3) - a decrease of 26% (680n) from Q3 2019/20
- 2670 special guardianship orders (SGOs) had been granted (770 in Q1; 880 in Q2; 1020 in Q3) - which is 63% of the total for 2019/20
- 2020 children with a PO were waiting to be matched - a decrease of 22% (580n) compared to Q3 2019/20 and a decrease of 17% (420n) compared to Q4 2019/20
- 50% of children with a PO have been waiting to be matched 18+ months - an increase of 7% compared to Q3 2019/20 and an increase of 2% compared to Q4 2019/20

Links to the ASGLB Business Intelligence report and local level data files are provided on the [Coram-i website](#).

Cafcass Care Order Applications: March 2021 & 2020-21 - England

Cafcass (the Children and Family Child Advisory and Support Service) has published its latest statistics on care order applications in England. The figures show that in March 2021, Cafcass received a total of 1,133 new care applications involving 1,858 children, which is respectively 4.3% and 7.5% higher than in March 2020.

The annual summary figures show that in the period from April 2020 to March 2021 Cafcass received a total of 12,786 new care applications, which is 2.4% lower than in 2019-20 (13,100).

For more information, including details of applications by individual local authorities, visit the [Cafcass website](#).

Scotland's Adoption Register Activity: January to March 2021 - Scotland

Scotland's Adoption Register (the Register) has published data on Adoption Register activity in Q4 of 2020-21. The figures show that between January and March 2021, 45 children and 40 adopters were referred to the Register, and a total of 21 matches were made. In the same period 18 children were removed from the Register due to either the child's plan changing to fostering, a non-Register match or a kinship care placement. The statistical summary also shows that a total of 712 matches have been made since Scotland's Adoption Register was established in 2016.

Further details can be found on [Scotland's Adoption Register website](#).

Vulnerable Children and Young People: DfE Survey on the Impact of the Coronavirus Outbreak, Waves 1-22 - England

The Department for Education (DfE) has published an updated report on its fortnightly survey of local authorities examining the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak on children's social care. The new report presents the findings from responses collected in waves 1-22 of the survey. Findings from wave 22 include:

- The total number of children looked after (CLA) was 1% higher than the same time in 2019-20 and the total number of children on a child protection plan (CPP) was 3% lower.
- A large proportion of CLA, children on a CPP and other children in need (CIN) have been in contact with a social worker in the last four weeks (70%, 95% and 65% respectively).

- The total number of referrals during Wave 22 was 11% lower than the usual number at that time of year.

Further details and a link to the report are provided on the [Gov.uk website](#) and the findings are discussed in an article published in Community Care: [Children's social work case complexity has increased due to Covid, councils tell DfE](#).

OTHER NEWS

Article 39: Protecting Teenagers in Care - England

The children's rights charity Article 39 has formally written to the government threatening legal action to protect the rights of 16 and 17 year-old children in care who are living in unregulated accommodation.

Further details are on the [Article 39 website](#).

Care Leavers: Rights to Social Services File - Wales

A care leaver is campaigning for a change in the law to notify care leavers of their right to view their social services file. Victoria Pritchard has not realised she had the right to claim the file when she turned 18 and only found out that the file existed when studying for a degree in youth and community work.

Further details are in this [BBC article](#).

Child Welfare Interventions and Preventative Services - UK

In an article published in Community Care, researchers Carey Oppenheim and Jordan Rehill consider the evidence around the rising numbers of children coming into the child protection system and the factors that affect how likely a family is to experience a child welfare intervention, and ask whether the state is intervening in the right way.

The full article is available on the [Community Care website](#).

Children's Social Care and Poverty - England

An article in the Guardian considers the criticism of the independent review of children's social care by Professor Eileen Munro, who warns against ignoring the key role of poverty in driving the rise of children and young people entering care in England.

The article is on the [Guardian website](#).

Ethnic Disproportionality in Child Welfare and Family Justice - UK

The Family Law Journal has published an article written by researchers at The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory which looks the availability of reliable data on the ethnicity of families who are known to Children's Services and subject to child protection interventions. The authors consider the messages from research about the impact of deprivation on referrals and the differences according to ethnicity, and argue that we need better information in order to understand the causes behind these inequalities and the strategies that might help to reduce them.

The article can be read on the [Family Law website](#).

Foster Care Fortnight 2021 - UK

Foster Care Fortnight, the Fostering Network's annual awareness raising campaign, this year runs from 10-23 May. The theme for the 2021 campaign is '#WhyWeCare', which encourages the whole fostering community to take the opportunity to share why they care about the lives of children in care.

Further details about the campaign and how to get involved are provided on the [Fostering Network website](#), and messages in support of Fostering Fortnight 2021 can be found on the Ofsted and CoramBAAF websites:

- [Ofsted: Foster Care Fortnight – time to celebrate the fostering community](#)
- [CoramBAAF proudly supports this year's Foster Care Fortnight campaign](#)

Foster Carers' Right to Unionise: Court of Appeal Ruling - UK

A [ruling](#) by the Court of Appeal on 16 April 2021 found that foster carers are "workers" for the purpose of Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and therefore have the right to unionise. The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) is now calling on Parliament and the Supreme Court to intervene and update legislation in line with the judgment in order to guarantee basic conditions for foster care workers.

Further details are in an article in [Personnel Today](#), on the [IWGB website](#) and in the [National Union of Professional Foster Carers \(NUPFC\) press release](#).

How Does Social Work Regulation Perpetuate Institutional Racism? - England

Community Care has published an article by Wayne Reid, BASW England's professional officer and a social worker, in which he argues that social work remains institutionally racist and highlights the lack of reference to anti-racism in social work standards and the over-representation of practitioners of colour in fitness to practise cases.

The full article, which includes links to numerous articles and resources including Wayne Reid's own '[anti-racism in social work](#)' portfolio, is available on the [Community Care website](#).

Improving LGBTQ+ Young People's Experiences of Care: New Project - England

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) and the University of Birmingham have announced the launch of a new project that aims to better understand and improve LGBTQ+ young people's experiences of social care and to improve LGBTQ knowledge for social workers. The LGBTQ+ Young People in Social Care project includes two linked studies: the first will qualitatively assess the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in residential care, and the second will evaluate an LGBTQ+ training programme for social workers working with LGBTQ+ young people.

Further details can be found on the [WWCSC website](#).

Independent Review of Children's Social Care: New Advisory Groups Announced - England

The independent review of children's social care in England has announced two new advisory groups, in addition to the Experts by Experience Board. The Evidence Group of academics and experts in the field will ensure that the review makes use of the most appropriate research. The Design Group (selected individuals from local government, policing, the judiciary, health and education) will guide how the review designs its recommendations. The review will also be supported by What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) who will produce and commission evidence summaries, rapid reviews and new analysis.

The membership of these groups can be found on the [Care Review website](#).

National Adopter Recruitment Campaign: Sibling Groups - England

The #YouCanAdopt national adopter recruitment campaign relaunched in April with a focus on finding families for sibling groups. The website includes videos on "What made

you decide to adopt a family group?', 'What are the practical challenges and support you received?', 'What advice do you have for those considering adoption brothers and sisters?' as well as a podcast featuring Sinitta talking to a mixed heritage couple about adopting brothers and sisters.

The campaign videos can be viewed on the [YouCanAdopt website](#). CoramBAAF have commented on the campaign [here](#).

NYAS: Trouble with the Law Campaign - England & Wales

The National Youth Advocacy Service NYAS has launched a campaign 'Trouble with the Law' to call on all Police and Crime Commissioner candidates to pledge their commitment to supporting care experienced children and young people by:

- Working to keep care experienced young people out of the criminal justice system
- Never making policies about them, without them
- Protecting victims of exploitation and missing children
- Campaigning to end the lifelong stigma of criminal records

Further details are on the [NYAS website](#).

Personal Experience: Care Leaver Transitioning to Adulthood - UK

Community Care features an article by a care experienced former social worker who describes her experiences of leaving care and facing some of the multiple challenges which separate children in care from their peers and leave them unsupported in adulthood. The article features a list of seven proposed changes which could help to improve outcomes for looked after children.

The article is on the [Community Care website](#).

Special Guardianship and the Role of Family Justice Boards - England & Wales

CoramBAAF are working with other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Best Practice Guidance published by the Public Law Working Group in June 2020. Family Justice Boards have an important role to play in the implementation process.

A link to an article by CoramBAAF's Kinship Care and Fostering Consultant on the Sussex Family Justice Board is on the [CoramBAAF website](#).

Staying Put: Grant Determination Letter - England

The Department for Education has published a Section 31 grant determination letter for 2021 to 2022 setting out the details of how much funding local authorities have been allocated for 'Staying Put' arrangements which enable care leavers to remain with their former foster carers after they turn 18.

A link to the letter is on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Surge in Calls to NSPCC Helpline in 2020-21 - UK

The NSPCC has reported that a record number of adults contacted the NSPCC helpline in 2020-21 to report concerns about children experiencing neglect and abuse, or about adults' health and behaviour. The Helpline received nearly 85,000 contacts in the year from April 2020 to March 2021, which is a 23% increase on the previous year, with 47% leading to a referral to an external agency, such as the police or children's services.

Further details are provided on the [NSPCC website](#).

WEBSITES & ONLINE RESOURCES

Adoption and Fostering Podcast: April 2021 - UK

The Adoption and Fostering Podcast by Al Coates and Scott Casson-Rennie includes the following episodes published in April 2021:

- Conversations - Damian - an adult adoptee on his experience of growing up with the knowledge of his adoption and the personal challenges that brought
- Conversations - Shushma - an adoptive parent talking about fostering and transracial adoption
- Episode 117 - Researcher Sandy Harper on the impact of fostering on foster carers
- Episode 118 - An Interview with Dave Linton from MADLUG who provide bags for children in care to promote dignity and value for those children
- Podcast special - with social worker Rhian Taylor, author of book 'Foster Boy' which reflects her knowledge and experience of children's experiences in care
- How's your Lockdown Hun? with Pol Penter and Scott

The full list of Adoption and Fostering podcasts is available on the [PodBean website](#).

Adoption in the 21st Century: Family Justice Council Online Seminars - England & Wales

The Family Justice Council ran a series of online seminars during March 2021 exploring adoption in England and Wales and wider, looking at special guardianship orders, trends in adoption, the Wales Adoption Cohort Study on early permanent success, tracing family members and contact with birth parents.

The recordings of the Adoption in the 21st Century online seminars can be viewed on the [Family Justice Council website](#).

Adoption UK: Recent Blog Posts - UK

Adoption UK has published a number of new blog posts addressing issues of relevance to the adoption community. The posts published in April 2021 include:

- [Adopting with an autistic child](#) - A guest blogger discusses her experience of going through the adoption process with her older birth child who lives with autism.
- [Empowering our community](#) - CEO, Sue Armstrong Brown, sets out Adoption UK's strategy and vision for the next 3 years.
- [Lords Committee voices concern over continuation of virtual visits to looked after children](#) - A House of Lords committee has published a report raising concerns about the length of time social workers will be able to continue to make virtual visits to vulnerable looked after children.
- [The hardest decision](#) - a personal account from an adoptive parent who experienced an adoption disruption.
- [The Importance of Play](#) - a play therapist and founder/director of a not-for-profit therapeutic organisation supporting adoptive families explains how play can help traumatised children regain a feeling of safety.

Bright Spots Practice Bank - England

Coram Voice has launched the new online Bright Spots Practice Bank, which showcases examples of how local authorities are supporting children in care and care leavers. The Practice Bank includes examples of how local authorities have used the findings from Bright Spots surveys to improve the well-being of children in care and care leavers as well as practice examples from local authorities where the surveys found children and young people were doing better than average.

Further information and links to the practice examples, which are grouped into 9 topic areas, can be found on the [Coram Voice website](#).

CELCIS Webinars - Scotland

CELCIS, the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland, has made a number of recent webinars available:

- [CELCIS: Continuing care and the welfare assessment](#) - webinar hosted by CELCIS, the Care Inspectorate and Clan Childlaw to clarify the legislative requirements when undertaking a Welfare Assessment to support planning for a 'looked after' young person to 'stay put' in a care placement under Continuing Care arrangements.
- [CELCIS: Quality care for children and residential care: evidence and practice](#) - CELCIS and SOS Children's Villages webinar in March 2021 to launch a Rapid Evidence Review of research on residential care and a discussion on enhancing policy and practice.
- [CELCIS: Using data to improve children's care and protection](#) - what's changed in data use in the sector since the beginning of 2020, including the impact of the PACE programme, the growing importance of the child protection minimum dataset, and the role of data in response to COVID-19.

Fostering Network: Recent News, Blogs and Podcasts - UK

The Fostering Network has published a new blog post on its work and issues of relevance to the fostering community.

[If it wasn't for my foster parents and social worker I wouldn't be where I am today](#) - a conversation about academic goals and achievements with two sisters in foster care

[UK's largest fostering charity urging more people to consider fostering post-lockdown](#) - the Fostering Network is calling on those with the right skills and experience to consider becoming a foster carer this Foster Care Fortnight (10 – 23 May 2021).

'Foundling: Found' Podcast: New Episodes - UK

Foundling: Found is a new podcast series hosted by care-leaver Julian Brown that investigates the real stories of care, from the Foundling Hospital archives dating back to 1739, right through to the present day. The topics covered in April 2021 are:

- Episode 4: Robyn Hughes - Julian talks to care-experienced young people to investigate Coram's archives that show the history of care, through to today.
- Episode 5: Debbie Bright - Julian is joined by Debbie Bright who has been a foster carer for over 250 children, for the last 28 years.
- Episode 6: Lucinda Hawksley and Jo Blyghthon CEHM Special - Julian is joined by author and Charles Dickens' great, great, great granddaughter Lucinda Hawksley and Voices Through Time archivist Jo Blyghthon.

The podcast is available from the [PodBean website](#).

Howard League Criminal Care? Blog - England & Wales

The Howard League for Penal Reform has published a new post in its Criminal Care? blog on ending the criminalisation of children in residential care:

- [Protocols to reduce the prosecution of children in care](#) - describing a research project to explore the content of the local area protocols to prevent children in care and care leavers becoming criminalised. Freedom of Information requests have revealed that 58% of police forces in England and Wales have at least one multi-agency protocol in place.

Key Messages from Research into Contact - UK

The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) has released the following resources sharing messages learned from recent research on contact:

- Animation - Following on from the publication of a briefing paper in September 2020 on contact between children in care or adopted and their families, the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory has released a short animation exploring the key messages from its research. The video is on [Youtube](#).
- Webinar - Contact between children in care and their families: messages from research: the second of a series of webinars produced by Nuffield FJO and the Judicial College. It explores what the research evidence tells us about contact between children who are in care or adopted and their families. The recording of the webinar is on [Youtube](#).

Kinship Carers Liverpool Video - England

Kinship Carers Liverpool have produced a short video about the support work that they do with kinship carers. The 7 minute video features interviews with a number of kinship carers and children in kinship care who have benefited from the support offered by the service. They reflect on their experiences of the pandemic and the benefits of peer support networks and other services like growing and cooking projects, gift packs and weekly doorstep visits.

The video can be viewed on [Vimeo](#).

Kinship Scotland: Webinars from Kinship Care Week - Scotland

Kinship Care Advice Service for Scotland (KCASS) has released recordings of a number of webinars from Kinship Care Week:

- [An Introduction to FASD](#) - This webinar from FASD Hub Scotland provides an introduction to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Topics include how alcohol affects the developing fetus, the prevalence of FASD and how it affects people, and signposts to additional resources and information. (1h20)
- [FACE19 Research and Findings](#) - Dr Maggie Grant presents the findings of the Face19 research, with a particular focus on kinship families. The University of Stirling study explored the experiences of children, young people and families during the Covid-19 pandemic and the response of social services to their needs. (1h21)
- [Kinship Care and the Law](#) - KCASS legal expert Rhona Pollock leads a panel made up of experienced lawyers in a question-and-answer session with kinship carers. (57m)

- [Q&A with Children's Minister Maree Todd](#) - Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People, answers questions from kinship carers, professionals and young people about policy matters affecting kinship families in Scotland. (55m)
- [Standing up for Siblings](#) - An overview of the work of Stand Up For Siblings to bring about legal rights for brothers and sisters to remain in contact and an introduction to the Lifelong Links pilot project that supports lasting family connections through group meetings and research into family networks. (1h34)
- [Trauma and the brain](#) - Clinical Psychologist David Trickey from the UK Trauma Council explores the neuroscience of trauma; how the brain processes traumatic memories and ways of supporting children and young people to cope. (1h55)
- [Understanding Trauma and Helping Recovery, for Children and Young People in Kinship Care](#) - a taster session - Anne Wilson from Children's Health Scotland gives an introduction to trauma, what it is, how it affects children's behaviours and techniques to support recovery. (1h02)

Research in Practice: Recent News and Views - UK

Research in Practice news items and blog posts published in April 2021 include:

- [Assessing organisational resilience and wellbeing: SWORD spring 2021](#) - Research in Practice
- [Building a fairer, healthier world](#) - Research in Practice
- [Building a parent-led movement for families affected by child welfare](#) - Taliah Drayak
- [Cafcass 'Peer Practice Specialists': sharing expertise to understand unique and diverse needs of children and families](#) - Susie Blamire
- [Care Experienced Conference Pledge – how has the pledge informed policy and practice two years on?](#) - Alison O'Sullivan
- [Emotional reparation for social work education](#) - Zoe Thomas
- [Supporting the wellbeing of children in care: Child-centred practice in Doncaster](#) - Laura Gough

The Social Matters Podcast: New Episodes - UK

The following new episodes of the Social Matters Podcast, in which three social worker friends discuss current social/social work issues, have been released:

- [The race report and institutional racism](#) - Nadia, Fran and Eugene discuss the recent Race report in the UK.
- [Misogyny](#) - a discussion about misogyny and how the structures of our society, our language and our acts continue to create hostile, uncomfortable and dangerous environments for women.

The Subjective Well-being of Children in Care and Care Leavers: Bright Spots Findings - England

On 23 March 2021, Linda Briheim-Crookall from Coram Voice and Julie Selwyn from the Rees Centre presented on the findings from the Bright Spots programme to the Independent Care Review Team.

The presentation, 'The Subjective Well-being of Children in Care and Care Leavers', can be downloaded from the [Coram Voice website](#).

Transparency Project Blog - England & Wales

The Transparency Project has published a number of new blog posts relating to family law and family courts in England & Wales. Recent posts include:

- [COVID-19 and the courts – The House of Lords Constitution Committee's report](#)
- [Discharging a party in a case – without telling them why](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – What does it mean for Family Courts and the people using them?](#)
- [F \(A Child : Adjournment\) \[2021\] EWCA Civ 469](#)
- [Fairness to birth parents in adoption hearings](#)
- [Family Court Reporting Watch Roundup 55](#)
- [From one President to another](#)
- [Is there still any place for supervision orders?](#)
- [The necessity for a care order](#)

Using Census Data to Explore Later Life Outcomes of Children in Care: Nuffield FJO Infographic Blog - England & Wales

The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO) has published an infographic blog presenting a summary of the findings of recent research conducted at University College London into the long-term health and social outcomes for care-experienced adults. The research used census data to investigate links between being in care as a child and a higher risk of mortality and ill-health in adulthood, comparing the outcomes of children living in residential care, in foster care (either formal or informal), with relatives, or with one or more parent.

The blog, which is the first in a new series, is available on the [Nuffield FJO website](#).

LEGISLATION

New Acts

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (c. 17)

An Act to make provision in relation to domestic abuse; to make provision for and in connection with the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner; to prohibit cross-examination in person in family proceedings in certain circumstances; to make provision about certain violent or sexual offences, and offences involving other abusive behaviour, committed outside the United Kingdom; and for connected purposes. Consideration of amendments by both Houses was completed on 27 April 2021 and received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

All documents related to the progress of the Bill, plus a link to the Act, can be found on the Parliament UK website and the measures introduced by the Act are discussed in a news item on the Gov.uk website.

Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 (asp 16)

An Act of the Scottish Parliament that creates additional protection for people who are at risk of domestic abuse, particularly where they are living with their abuser. The Bill was

introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 2 October 2020 and passed Stage 3 on 17 March 2021. The Bill became law on 5 May 2021.

All documents related to the progress of the Bill, plus a link to the Act, can be found on the Scottish Parliament website.

Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 (c. 16)

An Act to impose duties on certain education and training providers in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Bill received its 3rd Reading in the House of Lords on 26 April 2021 and received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

All documents related to the progress of the Bill, plus a link to the Act, can be found on the UK Parliament website.

Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021

A Scottish Government Act to set up a scheme to make financial payments ('redress payments') to survivors of historical child abuse in care in Scotland, and in some circumstances where the survivor has died, to their partner or children, and to set up a new independent public body, Redress Scotland, to make decisions about payments. The Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 13 August 2021 and completed Stage 3 on 11 March 2021 with MSPs voting unanimously for it to become law. The Bill became law on 23 April 2021.

All documents related to the progress of the Bill, plus a link to the Act, can be found on the Scottish Parliament website.

New Statutory Instruments/Rules

- [SI 2021/546 - The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit \(Care Leavers and Homeless\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#)
- [SI 2021/522 - The Inspectors of Education, Children's Services and Skills \(No. 2\) Order 2021](#)
- [SI 2021/516 - The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018 \(Commencement No. 3 and No. 4 and Transitional and Saving Provisions\) \(Amendment\) Order 2021 / Gorchymyn Deddf Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol a'r Tribiwnlys Addysg \(Cymru\) 2018 \(Cychwyn Rhif 3 a Rhif 4 a Darpariaethau Trosiannol a Darpariaethau Arbed\) \(Diwygio\) 2021](#)
- [SR 2021/118 - The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit \(Care Leavers and Homeless\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2021](#)

Progress of Bills

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

A Scottish Government Bill to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the law in Scotland, with the aim of ensuring that children's rights are respected and protected in the law in Scotland and that public authorities are legally required to respect and protect children's rights in all the work that they do. The Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 1 September 2020 and completed Stage 3 on 16 March 2021 with MSPs voting unanimously for it to become law. The Bill has now been referred to the Supreme Court under section 33 of the Scotland Act 1998 by the Attorney General and the Advocate General for Scotland.

The full text of the Bill as passed and related documents are available on the [Scottish Parliament website](#) and the referral of the Bill to the Supreme Court is discussed in an article on the [BBC website](#).

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS & MOTIONS

House of Commons

British Nationality: Children in Care

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking (a) to ensure local authorities apply to the EU Settled Status scheme on the behalf of children in their care and (b) where local authorities have failed to make that application. [[184541](#)]

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons local authorities are required to pay £1000 to register a child in their care for UK citizenship. [[184542](#)]

Children: Disability

Grahame Morris (Easington): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by the Disabled Children's Partnership entitled Loneliest lockdown, if he will ensure that the Government's education recovery, led by Sir Kevan Collins, will include a dedicated recovery policy for disabled children and their families that addresses the physical and mental health impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on those groups. [[182038](#)]

Children: Disadvantaged

Christian Wakeford (Bury South): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to increase funding for the mentoring of vulnerable children in or on the edge of care. [[183320](#)]

Children: Domestic Violence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough): To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to help ensure that (a) the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service and (b) social service officers have the necessary (i) experience, (ii) qualifications, (iii) time and (iv) authority to investigate allegations of (A) violence and (B) abuse. [[185999](#)]

Children in Care: Prison Sentences

Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on average how many looked after children have received custodial sentences in each of the last 10 years. [[183149](#)]

Children in Care: Restraint Techniques

Christian Wakeford (Bury South): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his department collects on the handcuffing or restraining of children in the care system. [[183319](#)]

Children: Health

Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of establishing an annual survey of children's wellbeing. [[185980](#)]

Children: Social Services

Jack Brereton (Stoke-on-Trent South): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure (a) information about dangerous individuals who would be a risk to children are identified in the social service system and (b) that that information is shared amongst relevant authorities; and whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of a national database to record previous involvement of individuals with social services. [[174952](#)]

Layla Moran (Oxford West and Abingdon): To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children's social care cases were (a) reported to and (b) taken forward by Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs after being initially reported in (i) England and (ii) Oxfordshire in each month in 2021 to date. [[179468](#)]

Christian Wakeford (Bury South): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by Serenity Welfare entitled Lives transformed, potential fulfilled, published in April 2021, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the finding in that report that adequate provision of care and early interventions for vulnerable children and young people by local authorities could unlock £7 billion by 2030. [[183318](#)]

Sarah Champion (Rotherham): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the national set of standards for independent and semi-independent placements for children in social care. [[184460](#)]

Further Education and Universities: Children in Care

Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support he is providing to help looked after children secure a place in (a) higher and (b) further education. [[180504](#)]

Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Looked After Children attend (a) university and (b) further education from (i) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and (ii) the UK in the latest period for which data is available. [[181278](#)]

Poverty: Children

Jim Shannon (Strangford): To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to bring forward further legislative proposals to help tackle child poverty. [[185883](#)]

Self-employed: Adoption

Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West): To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the adequacy of financial support available for self-employed people who are adopting children. [[185404](#)]

House of Lords

Care Leavers: Social Services

Lord Watson of Invergowrie: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the forthcoming consultation on national standards for unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers, as announced in the Government's consultation response Reforms to unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers, published on 19 February, will include a question on whether these standards should apply to care leavers aged 18 and over as well as those aged 16–17. [[HL15271](#)]

Children in Care

Lord Russell of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Practice guidance: placements in unregistered children's homes in England or unregistered care home services in Wales, published on 12 November 2019; and, in the light of that guidance, whether it is permissible for a child on remand to be (1) placed, and (2) detained, in unregulated accommodation. [[HL14659](#)]

Department for Education: Departmental Responsibilities

Lord Watson of Invergowrie: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to give the Minister for Children and Families a position in Cabinet. [[HL14953](#)]

Human Trafficking: Children

Baroness Doocey: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that police forces in England and Wales can collaborate with EU counterparts on missing children and trafficking investigations when a child has been trafficked from the UK to Europe. [[HL14407](#)]

Internet: Offences against Children

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to protecting children from sexual abuse online, for example through joining up the upcoming online harms legislation with the new strategy on violence against women and girls. [[HL14817](#)]

Special Educational Needs: Disadvantaged

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that children with special educational needs in disadvantaged areas receive the required support. [[HL14545](#)]

Northern Ireland

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill

Ms Joanne Bunting (East Belfast): To ask the Minister of Health when he plans to seek the Executive's agreement to introduce the Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill to the Assembly. [[AQW 17802/17-22](#)]

Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

Mr Trevor Lunn (Lagan Valley): To ask the Minister of Education for an update on the work of his Department to develop policy in accordance with the aims of the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. [[AQW 17307/17-22](#)]

Mother and Baby Homes, Magdalene Laundries and Historical Clerical Child Abuse

To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Interdepartmental Working Group on Mother and Baby Homes, Magdalene Laundries and Historical Clerical Child Abuse. [[AQO 1091/17-22](#)]

Trauma-informed Practice

Mr Trevor Lunn (Lagan Valley): To ask the Minister of Health for an update on the work of the Safeguarding Board of Northern Ireland to implement and facilitate the adoption of trauma informed practice. [[AQW 17309/17-22](#)]

Scotland

No relevant questions this month.

Wales

No relevant questions this month.