

News links from April 2022

Poverty and Inequality

Research carried out by the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) on behalf of baby bank charity [Little Village](#) reveals that around half of the 4.2 million children in poverty in the UK live in a family with a child under the age of five. 1.3 million babies and children under 5 are in poverty. Furthermore, of families with a child under 5, 47% of racial minority families, 55% of single parent families and 40% of families with a disabled parent are living in poverty. The charity cites [Resolution Foundation's prediction](#) that the total number of children in poverty is predicted to rise by 2024/25, with over one in three children expected to be living in poverty by that time.

The report calls for investment in childcare and early years support and changes to Universal Credit. [Read the report](#) or read [Nursery World's news article](#).

Child Health

Worrying news is emerging of a mysterious spike in acute hepatitis in children across Europe. The UK's public health agencies have been investigating 74 cases of hepatitis - an illness causing liver inflammation - in children since January. [Read the report](#).

[The Lancet](#) report on optimising child and adolescent health and development sees global situations (crises, conflicts, climate change - all compounded by the pandemic) as an opportunity to reinvigorate global commitments to child health, wellbeing, and children's rights, and to equitably scale up evidence-based interventions delivered through resilient primary health care to achieve universal health coverage. [Read the report](#).

[The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health \(RCPHC\)](#) have published their annual review about the work they have done in 2021 to improve health outcomes for children and young people, including tackling poverty and child health inequalities, supporting infant mental health, and standing up for equality. [Read the review](#).

Early Years

Ofsted reported on education recovery in early years providers in April, and found worrying delays in speech and language development as well as social and emotional development. [Read the report](#) or read [news report](#) from BBC.

The Government's thinking on how to tackle the cost of living crisis was widely reported ([see this BBC report](#)) but the PM's suggestion to cut costs by lowering the legal limits of adult supervision in English childcare settings was roundly criticised by sector organisations, nurseries and experts. Read the [Nursery World report](#).

TES outlined how a flagship Scottish government policy has sought to nearly double funded early learning and childcare (EYC) hours. [Read the article](#).

Children in Care

A report by OFSTED has found a lack of collective knowledge on the needs of children in care and calls for further research. [Read the report.](#)

Last month we highlighted a [Competition and Markets Authority \(CMA\) report](#) into social care costs which found that the prices and profits of the largest private providers were “*materially higher than would be expected if the market was working well*”. A Guardian investigation found widespread evidence of this, with English councils paying £1 million per child for places in private children homes.

The [Association of Directors of Children’s Services \(ADCS\)](#) has been calling for legislation preventing for-profit operations or a cap on the level of fees chargeable in fostering and residential services. [Read the article.](#)

Online Safety

The Online Safety Bill had its second reading in April. A reading list was provided which included media coverage, responses and other material: [read more here.](#)

The Bill cannot come too quickly as there have been shocking accounts from teachers about being asked unexpected questions by their pupils about online porn and violence. [Read the BBC report.](#)

The Guardian reported on findings from the [Internet Watch Foundation \(IWF\)](#) that children as young as between three and six are involved in a growing trend of self-generated child sexual abuse - where children are manipulated into recording their own abuse before it is shared online. More than half of the cases involved a sibling or friend of the child. [Read the article.](#)

Education

OFSTED’s corporate strategy is outlined in its report for the next five years: [read more.](#) Early years providers welcome a stronger focus and support from the inspectorate, [Nursery World reports.](#)

25% of primary school heads and 37% of secondary heads who started their roles in 2015 had left by 2020, according to DfE figures reported by the BBC. The DfE collects this data every year and since 2011 the numbers have risen, with “*crushing workloads and frozen pay*” being cited as the reasons. [Read the article.](#)

In similar vein, an annual survey by the National Education Union (NEU) found that 44% of state school teachers plan to leave by 2027, and 22% of those plan to leave within two years, with “*unmanageable workloads*” being blamed. [Read the article.](#)

Mental Health

An open consultation on the Department of Health and Social Care’s mental health and well-being plan is underway. There is a call for evidence and views are being sought by the deadline of 7 July 2022. [Read more.](#)

A survey of GPs conducted by the mental health charity [Stem4](#) found that 95% of GPs believe mental health services for children and young people are critically failing: most would describe services as either in crisis (46%) or very inadequate (49%). [Read more.](#)

Children in Custody

In England and Wales, children between 10 and 17 can be held criminally responsible for their actions and in February 2022 there were 414 children in custody. [The Youth Custody Service \(YCS\)](#) determines where to place children based on their individual needs, placement recommendations and the accommodation available. The [National Audit Office \(NAO\)](#) has undertaken a detailed scrutiny of children into custody in their latest report, which aims to support Parliamentary scrutiny over care and safety in custodial settings. [Read the report.](#)

Black Children and Punishment

“*Black children are more likely to face tougher punishments at school because they are viewed as “less innocent” and more adult-like*”, a report says. Over-policing of black children in schools is explored in a BBC article. This process of “*adultification*” means black children can feel unsafe and over-policed at school, the [Commission on Young Lives](#) in England report explores this in detail and offers some key recommendations.

[Read the article](#) or [read the Commission on Young Lives report](#)