

Missing, Child Exploitation and Vulnerability Research & Development Round-up

February 2023

LGBTQ+ History Month



LGBTQ+

Internet Matters have produced [Advice](#) for parents and carers on supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people online on their [Inclusive Digital Safety hub](#).

[The Proud Trust](#) offer a range of resources for LGBT+ young people, covering topics such as coming out, faith and religion, and staying safe. There are also stories and experiences from other LGBT+ people in the “People like me” section.

The Prince’s Trust has a [page](#) listing organisations that support LGBTQ+ young people and young adults.

Allsorts produce a really useful [selection of toolkits, booklets and guides](#) for LGBTQ+ young people covering topics such as managing gender dysphoria, LGBTQ+ people of colour, LGBTQ people of faith etc.

Place2be children’s mental health charity have produced a [blog](#) listing places LGBTQ+ young people, their families and schools can find support with their wellbeing.

The Anna Freud Centre has produced a [booklet](#) on LGBTQI+ mental health with a comprehensive list of support services on the back page.

Mentally Healthy Schools have a [webpage](#) and a range of resources to help schools support their LGBTQI+ pupils.

[Mermaids](#) offer webchat, a helpline, information & advice for trans young people.

The Trevor Project is an American website so the [helplines and support services listed are not available to people living in the UK](#). However, their [articles, resources and guides](#) are useful and cover a wide range of topics.

Child Exploitation

The DfE's [Tackling Child Exploitation Programme](#) has produced a set of multi-agency practice principles for working with children and young people experiencing child exploitation or extra-familial harm. These will be launched on February 20th and there are a number of regional launch events you can book onto [here](#).

Commission on Young Lives [parliamentary seminar](#) brought together key stakeholders to discuss the Commission's final report. The event focussed on solutions and approaches to protect teenagers at risk of exploitation and serious violence and the support needed for them to succeed.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

New [CSA report](#) shows a significant improvement in the identification of child sexual abuse including a 15% increase in concerns of children being sexually abused, mirrored by a 15% rise in recorded offences of child sexual abuse, although there is concern about the growing time taken for reported CSA offences to proceed through the criminal justice system.

The CSA Centre are offering a free, accessible 90 minute [e-learning course](#) on identifying and responding to intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse. The course seeks to help professionals recognise when children might be showing them that something is wrong and understand how to help.

Children's Social Care

[Long-term strategy launched to fix children's social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – press release.

The Strategy sets out the government's response in relation to 3 reviews (Independent Review of Children's Social Care, National Panel Review into the tragic deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson and the Competition and Markets Authority review).

You can find the Implementation Strategy and consultation document here [Children's social care: Stable Homes, Built on Love - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Direct link to consultation website [Children's social care strategy: Stable Homes, Built on Love - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#). Closing date is 11th May.

The government have also published a Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard, which is also being consulted on and is available at: [Children's social care national framework and dashboard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The direct link is [Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#) . Closing date is 11th May.

The NSPCC has produced a useful [summary](#) of the government's plans to reform Children's Social Care.

As part of her independent Family Review, the Children's Commissioner has produced a [Report](#) into siblings in care and underlined the need to keep siblings together wherever possible, as an estimated 20,000 children are separated from a sibling when placed in care. This [blog](#) by Hannah, a 19 year-old care leaver, shares her experiences.

County Lines

Breaking the County Lines extended [news report](#) features affected parents, Lindsay Dalton, (CEO of Parents Against Child Exploitation), Anne Longfield (former Children's Commissioner) and the Policing Minister, Chris Philp. The programme explores the impact of County Lines exploitation on families and asks whether young people should be criminalised for their involvement.

Catch22's Risk & Resilience [podcast series](#) has episodes on Missing children, online child sexual abuse, the criminalisation of children and care, and the latest on County Lines. Johnny Bolderson, Manager of the National County Lines Support & Rescue Service, has also written a [blog](#) about County Lines.

[Article](#) explaining the phenomenon of County Lines and asking whether it is an old crime with a new definition.

Free downloadable [County Lines resource](#) from Unseen when you sign up for their emails.

Short [video](#) depicting grooming and Child Criminal Exploitation.

[BBC news story](#) detailing how an exploited child's mobile phone was used to smash a trafficking gang and establish that the child was a victim.

Disadvantage

New [analysis](#) from Action for Children shows that most of the children in poverty live in families with significant barriers to raising their incomes through work. The report explores the limits of work as a route out of poverty and hardship.

The latest Joseph Rowntree Foundation [report](#) into UK poverty shows that around one in five of our population (20%) were in poverty in 2020/21. Living standards are likely to have fallen since the latest official data and many low-income families are struggling to afford essentials.

Mental Health

'This May Help' is a [website](#) to support parents and carers with concerns around their child's mental health.

[Ripple suicide prevention tool](#) is an interceptive tool designed to present a visual prompt when a person searches for harmful keywords or phrases relating to the topic of self-harm or suicide. It provides signposting to 24/7, free mental health support at a time when a child feels vulnerable.

The Government have published their annual [State of the Nation report](#) on children's wellbeing in 2022. Findings include: Anxiousness among pupils appears to have "worsened" in 2021/22; rates of probable mental disorders and eating problems among young people in England remain "at elevated levels" compared to before the pandemic; wellbeing rates were significantly lower for disadvantaged groups in school e.g. those with SEND or from a minority background.

The Joint Committee on the [Draft Mental Health Bill](#) 2022 have published their response to the draft legislation. Their report draws attention to racial inequity in Mental Health orders, lack of appropriate facilities for people with learning disabilities, the need for greater resourcing and the need for stronger requirements to avoid the placement of children in adult or in out of area wards.

Modern Slavery

Illustrated [Guide](#) to the National Referral Mechanism.

New [Statutory Guidance](#) on Modern Slavery, which includes amendments that will raise the threshold for reasonable grounds (RG) decisions, which now must be based on 'objective factors'.

Online Safety & Online Harms

Free brief [downloadable guide](#) to the Online Safety Bill from SWGfL and Schillings.

The Children's Commissioner has published a [report](#) on children's exposure to online pornography. The report finds that pornography exposure is widespread and normalised. By age 9, 10% of children had already seen pornography. The average age at which they first see pornography is 13, and 79% of children had encountered violent pornography by age 18.

[Free guide](#) from Internet Matters on protecting children from online pornography.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has [reported](#) that self-generated child abuse videos have increased by 1000% since before the pandemic. This refers to imagery of children sexually abusing themselves on camera while coerced by a predator over the internet. These images now make up two-thirds of imagery investigated by analysts.

Welsh Government [information hub](#) with advice for children and young people about online issues and worries.

Marie Collins Foundation [seminar](#) for Safer Internet Day discusses how to make space for conversations with children about their online life; the importance of creating an open environment; having conversations [before](#) problems arise and then how to respond should online abuse take place.

Internet Matters [report](#) 'Towards a child-friendly metaverse' summarises current developments in the metaverse landscape, along with early evidence of the opportunities and risks posed to children.

[Blog](#) for parents and carers about the BeReal photo-sharing app which has gained significantly in popularity recently.

New [Natterhub report](#) on the online experiences of children across the UK finds 75% of 6- to 7-year-olds have taken part in a conversation online; three quarters of 8-9-year olds have posted a photo of themselves online; and 60% of 7- to 8-year-olds have felt pressured or anxious online.

Safeguarding

Short [animation](#) from Research In Practice explaining what transitional safeguarding is and why it is important.

Substance Misuse

Latest [government data](#) for young people's substance misuse treatment

The new FamAnon helpline number is 0207 498 4680. Families Anonymous is a fellowship of family members and friends affected by another's abuse of mind-altering substances, or related behavioural problems. The helpline is usually staffed 1-4pm and 6-9pm every day.

ASH and Smoke-free Sheffield have produced a range of [free resources](#) on youth vaping, including a Teachers' toolkit; classroom presentation and animation; e-leaflet and awareness posters.

VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls)

A new survey and [report](#) from Crimestoppers has revealed that one in six children face unwanted sexual harassment in public from the age of 10. The survey also found that that 10% of women said they had been raped, with 23% saying they had been 'forced' to have sex.

[Consent one-hour drama](#) on All 4 is based on the Everyone's Invited campaign and explores "what it feels like for young people in an environment where sexual expectations are distorted by the instant access to porn and where the lines of consent are minimised". Strong language and sexual scenes make it [unsuitable for children](#) but it can help adults understand the sexualised culture which teens are navigating.

American [website](#) Love is Respect has some helpful pages explaining consent, sexual coercion, creating boundaries in a relationship and recognising when relationships are unhealthy.

Youth Violence

[Blog](#) about the Nuffield Trust's evaluation of Redthread's hospital-based youth violence intervention programme.

The Mayor of London's office has done some [research](#) into the impact of knife imagery on young people, which found some young people may be 'desensitised' to seeing images of large knives posted on social media whereas knife imagery can make others feel fearful and scared. A small number of young people admitted seeing images of large knives would make them more likely to carry a knife themselves.

OTHER

New [video](#) short from Steve Croshaw encouraging professionals to ensure they don't use victim-blaming language when referring to a child who has been exploited. Steve has produced a range of videos about child exploitation available on his [website](#).

Esme Fairbairn's Involving Young People Collective have developed a [blueprint](#) for effective and meaningful coproduction. The IYPC have worked with agencies to co-create a set of values that can serve as an indication of best practice for involving young people.

The Equality & Human Rights Commission has produced a [report](#) looking at the state of children's rights in Great Britain and making recommendations for change in a number of areas, including violence against children; health and health services; standard of living; the right to education; administration of child justice.

The Respect Project Bristol has co-produced a [booklet](#) with 9-11 yr olds sharing their experiences of racism and their hopes for the future: 'If racism vanished for a day.'

New BASW child protection masterclass training [series](#) available to social work members and non-members. Each session lasts 1.5 hours delivered online using MS Teams with limited group sizes. (cost involved)

[Online report](#) looking at the current research into ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and how to mitigate their impact. Intended as an evidence-based guide for those developing policy, practice or interventions.

[Free interactive Tap Out app](#) from Mary Seacole Housing Association that explores themes of exploitation. The app is coproduced with people with lived experience. Follow three characters as they navigate real-life decisions and issues including Youth Violence, drug use and exploitation.