

The Fostering Network report to Fostering Services: 10 Jul 2020

Coronavirus Updates:

1. Government and Department for Education

a) **Public Health England: Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups (16/06/2020)** – This delayed [report](#) follows on from the PHE’s initial report on 02/06/2020 [disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19](#) which showed that there is an association between belonging to some ethnic groups and the likelihood of testing positive and dying with COVID-19.

“Death rates from COVID-19 were higher for Black and Asian ethnic groups when compared to White ethnic groups. This is the opposite of what is seen in previous years, when the all-cause mortality rates are lower in Asian and Black ethnic groups.”

This second report highlights key issues faced by Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities:

- Longstanding inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19
- Increased risk of exposure to and acquisition of COVID-19
- Increased risk of complications and death from COVID-19
- Racism, discrimination, stigma, fear and trust
- Need for a wider literature review
- Highlights seven key recommendations going forward

Also see:

- **Channel 4 Article:** [Revealed the key contribution withheld from BAME community review](#) (11/06/2020)
- **BASW statement:** [Action needed to address the disproportionate number of deaths from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities due to Covid-19](#) (10/06/2020)
- **Community Care:** [21 social workers have died from Covid-19, show official figures](#) (28/06/2020)

b) **Children and Young Persons (Keir Starmer’s motion) (10/06/2020):** A motion to annul a statutory instrument relaxing a range of duties safeguarding children and young people was defeated on 10 June 2020 by 260 votes to 123. Also see:

- **Community Care article:** [MPs vote against scrapping controversial relaxation of children in care duties](#) (10/06/2020)
- **NYAS:** [Parliament votes against scrapping new law that undermines children’s rights](#) (10/06/2020)
- **Article 39:** [Safeguards for children in care – House of Commons](#) (11/06/2020)

c) **DfE Guidance: Various - New or updated guidance (June 2020)**

- **Informing DfE of the death of a colleague across children’s services (09/06/2020)** – The DfE has issued [guidance](#) about how employers and providers can tell them if a carer or colleague in children’s services has died. This includes children’s social care workers, foster carers and education staff.

Employers and providers are encouraged to tell the family, friends or colleagues of the individual who has died that they're submitting this information. There's no legal duty on employers and providers to submit this information to the department. However, this information will help to make sure the appropriate steps can be taken following the death of a carer or colleague in children's services.

- **DfE Guidance: Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (updated 16/06/2020)** – See updated [guidance](#).
- **DfE guidance: What parents and carers need to know about early year providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus outbreak (18/06/2020)** – See [guidance](#).
- **DfE Guidance: Supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening (19/06/2020)** – see [guidance](#).

d) Further funding uplift announced for councils caring for children seeking asylum (08/06/2020) – The Home Office has significantly increased [financial support](#) for councils who look after children. Funding for all local authorities providing ongoing support to those unaccompanied children leaving care will receive the new rate (*£240 per person per week*) replacing the previous rates of *£150 and £200 per week, representing a 20-60% increase*.

Furthermore, a targeted 25% uplift in funding for local authorities across the UK who are currently looking after the highest numbers of unaccompanied children when compared to their child population will receive the new rate of *£143 per child per night instead of the standard rate of £114 per child per night*.

2. Contact: Various (Jun 2020):

a) Nuffield Family Justice Observatory and The Fostering Network: Contact Webinar (Jun 2020) – We have now hosted two webinars. Also see:

- Contact during lockdown: [A follow up interview with Professor Beth Neil](#) (23/06/2020)
- Contact during lockdown - [How children and their birth families are keeping in touch?](#) (May 2020)
- The Fostering Network: [Covid-19 contact arrangements: Social worker checklist](#) (Jun 2020)
- The Fostering Network: [Covid-19 contact arrangements: Foster carer checklist](#) (Jun 2020)

b) Social Work Scotland: Connections for Well-being and Contact Framework (16/06/2020) – This contact [framework](#) offers guidance to decision makers to ensure children in public care in Scotland maintain strong connections with family during Covid-19. These resources may be useful points of reference for services in England. Also see Appendices A and B:

- [Contact Framework - Appendix A \(Table\)](#)
- [Contact Framework - Appendix B \(Resources\)](#)

c) House of Commons Library: Briefing Paper - Coronavirus: Separated Families and Contact with Children in Care FAQs (UK) (02 Jun 2020) - This [paper](#) provides brief information in response to some key questions regarding the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on separated families, maintenance arrangements and access to children.

d) What Works for Children's Social Care (Apr-Jun 2020) - See various [Covid-19 resources](#) i.e. rapid evidence reviews and practice guides regarding contact, amongst other area to provide guidance and support to practitioners working in children's social care.

3. Education: Various resources (May/June 2020):

- a) **House of Commons Library: Coronavirus and schools: FAQs (12 Jun 2020)** - This short [briefing](#) addresses some key issues and FAQs in relation to schools and the Coronavirus outbreak
- b) **Anna Freud National Centre of Children and Families: Managing unexpected endings and transitions - A practical guide to support pupils and students to manage change during periods of disruption (May 2020)** - *Schools are preparing for a gradual reopening, although at the time of writing it is unclear exactly what this will look like. [Managing unexpected endings and transitions](#) for children and young people to return to school will be key to maintaining their wellbeing.*
- c) **Adoption UK: Education: [Five things to discuss with your child's school ahead of transition](#), [Impact of school closures on Care Experienced Young People report](#)** (Apr 2020)
- d) **Think U Know: Resources to support parents and carers during COVID-19 and the closure of schools (Jun 2020):** See [online safety at home resources](#), [Online safety and safeguarding during COVID-19](#)
- e) **National Education Union: Advice for parents and carers** – Fun creative [activities and resources](#) for families learning outside of school.
- f) **National Foundation for Education Research: School's responses to Covid-19 - Returning Pupils to School (1 Jun 2020)** - The [report](#) presents initial findings from an in-depth and representative study examining the impact of Covid-19 on mainstream schools in England.
- g) **NNECL (National Network for Education of Care Leavers): (Jun 2020)** - NNECL has been working closely with Stand Alone, Become, Spectra, the Unite Foundation, Office for Students and the Department of Education to ensure that students at University studying without family support are considered. From this the Office for Students and NNECL have produced [good practice guides](#) to help Universities and services in their work. Also see Office for Students [briefing note](#).

4. Ofsted: Various (Jul/June 2020):

- Messages from Yvette Stanley: [3 Jul 2020](#), [26 June 2020](#), [19 June 2020](#), [12 Jun 2020](#) and [5 Jun 2020](#)
- Guidance: [What Ofsted means by a serious incident](#) (17/06/2020)
- Ofsted: [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#)

5. CoramBAAF (Jun 2020): Information that will be helpful to practitioners.

- [Supervisory and Assessment Visits to Foster Carer and Prospective Foster Carer Households](#) (8 Jun 2020)
- [Making Arrangements for Contact for Children in Care](#) (8 Jun 2020)
- [Adult Medical Reports in Family Placement Guidance](#) (15 Jun 2020)

6. Kinship Care Alliance and CoramBAAF – Delivering Good Practice Initial Assessments of Family and Friends Carers in the Context of Covid-19 (Jun 2020) – This [guidance](#) has been produced to assist practitioners and sets out some possible ways to respond to the challenges posed by Covid-19, in order to undertake robust and balanced assessments which can support sound decision-making. This guidance should be read as an appendix to the [Initial Family and Friends Care Assessment: A good practice guide](#)

7. Mental Health and wellbeing (Jun 2020): Various:

- a) **RCPCH (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health): Various**

- **COVID-19 - research studies on children and young people's views (Jun 2020)** – see the new portal containing all the [research studies](#) to date on children and young people's experiences during Covid-19.
- **RCPCH: How is COVID-19 affecting children and young people in BAME communities? (24/06/2020)** – The current [news article](#) discusses the overrepresentation of the 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities' cases of coronavirus, and the subsequent impact this is having for children and young people, who are experiencing the pandemic differently from their peers.
- **RCPCH: Looked After Children services in COVID19 pandemic recovery plans (3 Jun 2020)** – This [statement](#) outlines key principles and standards for local service providers and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to aid the development of recovery plans for Looked After Children, raising awareness of vulnerable children and young people to mitigate risk and offer support where possible.

b) XenZone (digital mental health provider): [Articles \(22/06/2020\)](#) Kooth (mental health and wellbeing platform for children and young people) which has seen significantly higher increases in suicidal thoughts, anxiety and depression among BAME young people, compared to their white counterparts. See [infographic](#).

c) The British Psychology Society: Guidance - Supporting care-experienced children and young people during the Covid-19 crisis and its aftermath (Jun 2020) - This [guidance](#) is intended for foster and kinship carers, adoptive parents, and professionals who work with care-experienced children in schools, residential care homes and other settings across the United Kingdom.

d) Centre for Mental Health: Covid-19: understanding inequalities in mental health during the pandemic (Jun 2020) – This report looks at the impact of the coronavirus crisis on mental health including children's mental health and calls on the Government to take urgent action on mental health inequalities in its planning for recovery from the pandemic. Read the report [here](#).

e) Place2be: Coronavirus: Wellbeing activity ideas for families (Jun 2020) - a list of recommended [resources and well-being activities](#) for families.

f) YouTube: Dr Dan Hughes - Parenting a Traumatized Child While Living through COVID 19 (24.05.2020)

g) Emerging Minds: Supporting children and young people with worries about COVID-19 – Providing useful evidence-based resources. See [advice and information](#) for parents, carers and people that work with children and young people.

h) The Lancet - Child and Adolescent Health: The effects of social deprivation on adolescent development and mental health (12 Jun 2020) - The [findings](#) reviewed highlight how physical distancing might have a disproportionate effect on an age group for whom peer interaction is a vital aspect of development.

8. National Youth Agency: Hidden in plain sight - Gangs and Exploitation A youth work response to COVID-19 (May 2020) – This [report](#) builds on the insights from NYA's '[Out of Sight?](#)' research (April 2020) on the vulnerabilities of young people caused or exacerbated by COVID-19. The report examines:

- the scale of and response to gang associated activity
- the exploitation of young people through lockdown and the impact of COVID-19
- draws on the latest data and on valuable insights from partners based on their work with young people

9. Children with Disabilities: Various

a) **Disabled Children's Partnership: #LeftInLockdown - Parent carers' experiences of lockdown (Jun 2020)** – This online survey was undertaken to assess *the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown on families with disabled children across the UK. The results will be used to assist government understanding and plans around support for disabled children both now and beyond lockdown.* View the report findings [here](#).

b) **Preparing Autistic & SEND Children for going back to school (Jun 2020)** - This short, video-based [online course](#) provides practical help and resources to help you prepare your Autistic and SEND children to go back to school when the time comes.

10. **RIP: Social work with children and families in the pandemic (part three) (Jun 2020)** – [Reflecting on social work](#) during the pandemic and considering opportunities and challenges ahead.

National Developments:

1. **Black Lives Matter: Various (Jun 2020)** – View The Fostering Network: [Statement on racism and injustice in society](#).

Some resources to help foster carers discuss this issue with children and young people.
Foster carers, children and young people:

- **Happiful Magazine:** [Free guide to help parent's talk to children about Black Lives Matter](#) (13/06/2020)
- **Yoopies:** [Quick introduction](#), [A Parent's Guide to Black Lives Matter](#)
- **Books for Topics:** [Childrens Books: Black Lives, Anti-Racism and BAME Characters](#)
- **BBC: Newsround:** [Advice to help you if your upset about racism](#) (17 Jun 2020)
- **Channel 4:** [The school that tried to end racism](#) (25/06/2020)
- **BBC: Black and British** – [The Forgotten History](#)

Some resources and articles to enable managers and practitioners to discuss good practice:
Practice Resources:

- **Research in Practice:** [Frontline Briefing – Confident practice in cultural diversity](#) (member access) (Jul 2015), [Understanding the lived experiences of black and ethnic minority children and families](#) (Jan 2020)
- **SCIE:** [Unconscious bias isn't just somebody else's problem; it's also yours](#) (Oct 2016)
- **Community Care Inform:** [Intersectionality: race, gender and other aspects of identity in social work with young people](#) (19/06/2020)
- **Social Work England:** [Black Lives Matter](#), [Professional Standards](#)
- **ACAS:** [Unconscious bias](#)
- **Summary of Anti-Racist Practice in social work (PDF)** [The History and Development of Anti-Racist Practice Claudia Bernard Professor of Social Work pdf](#) (2019)

Recent Articles:

- **Community Care article:** [Black Lives Matter: social work must respond with action – not platitudes](#) (12/06/2020), [Frontline says it must improve on race in response to critical feedback from participants](#) (26/06/2020)
- **SCIE:** [The fierce urgency of now: Tackling racial inequalities in social care](#) (05/06/2020)

Legislation and Employment:

- **UK legislation:** [Equality Act 2010](#), ([An introduction to the Equality Act 2010](#), [Equality Act Guidance](#)), [Equality Act 2006](#), [Race Relations \(Amendments\) Act 2000](#), [Race Relations Act 1976](#), [Race Relation Act 1968](#), [Race Relations Act 1965](#)

- **ACAS:** [Equality and Discrimination](#), [Equality and discrimination: understand the basics](#) (Jul 2019)
- **TUC Guide:** [Combatting racist abuse in the workplace](#)

2. Special Guardianship and Family and Friends Carers:

a) **Public Law Working Group: Recommendations to achieve best practice in the child protection and family justice systems: Special guardianship orders (June 2020)** – This [final report](#) offers guidance and makes key recommendations to provide best practice, core changes to social work practice and the approach of the courts to achieve best practice in child protection and family justice systems. Also, see message from the President of the Family Division [here](#).

b) **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's: Various (Mar 2020): Special Guardianship Orders (Various):**

- [London Borough of Lambeth \(19 004 604\)](#) (20 Mar 2020) - Summary: Ms X complains the Council was at fault in how it reviewed her financial support as a Special Guardian and reduced her allowance. The Ombudsman has found no evidence of fault in the way the Council considered these matters so is completing his investigation.
- [Herefordshire Council \(18 016 405\)](#) (20 Mar 2020) - Summary: The Council was at fault for backdating Mrs X's special guardianship allowance to the date it completed a delayed financial assessment, rather than the date she asked for support – five months before the assessment. It was also at fault for a delay in applying for therapeutic funding for Mrs X's niece. The Council has agreed to apologise to Mrs X's niece for the delay, and to make a payment of £200 to recognise her injustice. It has also agreed to backdate Mrs X's special guardianship allowance to the date she first asked for support.
- [Durham County Council \(19 000 889\)](#) (18 Mar 2020) - Summary: Ms B complained the Council stopped her special guardianship allowance and this caused financial hardship. The Ombudsman has found fault with the Council. The Council did not provide Ms B with budgeting support and it did not record its reason for stopping the allowance adequately. The Ombudsman has recommended actions the Council will take to remedy this injustice.

Information sharing:

- [Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council \(19 010 797\)](#) (20 Mar 2020) - Summary: Mr and Mrs X complained that the Council contacted another local authority and shared false allegations about them. The Ombudsman finds no fault with the Council's decision. However, there was fault in the way the information was shared. The Council has already taken reasonable steps to remedy this.

3. **DfE Guide to looked after children statistics in England (May 2020)** – This [guide](#) provides and outline of the key areas covered:

- Data collection and coverage
- Data processing
- Information on published statistics
- Data quality and uses

4. **Children's Commissioner: IMO Podcast (Jun 2020)** – these [award nominated podcasts](#) feature open and honest conversations with care leavers. View the [series of podcasts](#) and also see each one outline below:

Series One:

- Ella: [the criminalisation of young people in care](#)
- Ryan: [reading his files](#)
- Nathaniel and Victoria: [about sibling contact](#)
- Rhianna: [being a child with HIV](#)

- Steven: [training to be a social worker](#)

Series Two:

- Louise: [mental health and post graduate support](#)
- Charlotte: [moving into semi-independence](#)

5. IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse): Various:

a) **'People don't talk about it' – Child sexual abuse in ethnic minority communities (25/06/2020)** - The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published new research exploring barriers faced by ethnic minority communities in reporting child sexual abuse. The report finds that racism and cultural stereotypes impact institutional response to child sexual abuse.

Working in collaboration with the Race Equality Foundation, [the report](#) analyses the views and experiences of over 80 individuals across a range of ethnic minority communities, including victims and survivors. It considers three key areas: barriers to disclosure; experiences of institutions; and support for victims and survivors.

b) **Truth Project: Thematic Report – Child sexual abuse in sports (18/06/2020)** - *The Inquiry has published a new [Truth Project thematic report](#), focusing on child sexual abuse in sports. Based on the accounts of victims and survivors who came forward to the Truth Project, the report analyses experiences of abuse across a wide range of sports such as angling, boxing, canoeing, football, gymnastics, ice skating and swimming. The report finds that coaches and instructors exploited children's vulnerabilities in order to groom and abuse them, as well as identifying certain factors which enabled abuse to take place.*

c) **Truth Project: Thematic Report - Child sexual abuse in custodial institutions (Apr 2020)** – This research [report](#) finds children sexually abused in custodial institutions faced extreme violence and sadism.

d) **Child Protection in religious organisations and settings (Ongoing)** – *In May the Inquiry held the first ever virtual public hearing. The hearing examined child protection in religious organisations and settings. Following the suspension of the Child protection in religious organisations and settings public hearing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Inquiry resumed the hearing via video conferences. More information about this investigation can be found [here](#).*

6. **University of York: Digital Well-being - On-line free course (Jun 2020):** This free online [course](#) is for anyone interested in understanding health and wellbeing in the digital age.

7. **Coram Children's Legal Centre: Children left out – Securing children's rights to stay in the UK beyond Brexit (Jul 2020)** - *With one year left before the close of the EU settlement scheme on 30 June 2021, this [report](#) looks at what the UK government needs to do to make sure no eligible child living in the UK is left without status.*

Also see: CLC: [Securing children's rights to stay in the UK](#), Community Care article (02/07/2020): [Urgent action needed to prevent thousands of children in care being in UK unlawfully, warns charity](#)

The Fostering Network: Development and Campaigns:

1. **Ongoing updates:** We continue to update our [coronavirus](#) pages on the website please do refer to the support pages, for [foster carers](#) and [fostering services](#). New on the website for fostering services:

2. **The Fostering Network: Covid-19 contact arrangements checklists for social workers and foster carers (Jun 2020):** see our weblinks below:

- [The Fostering Network: Covid-19 contact arrangements: Social worker checklist](#)
- [The Fostering Network: Covid-19 contact arrangements: Foster carer checklist](#)

3. **#FundFosterCarers (Jun 2020):** Our [campaign](#) calls for governments to ensure foster families are properly financially supported and protected. Also see [Response to temporary allowance increase in Northern Ireland](#).

4. **152 organisations call on Government to put children at the heart of recovery (Jun 2020)** - The Fostering Network alongside 150 organisations is calling on the Prime Minister to announce that children will join health and the economy as the three pillars of the government's coronavirus response. See our news update [here](#).

5. **Online Training** – We have updated our online training, please view links below and information via our website. Please note the following session charges: £10 plus VAT for members and £20 plus VAT for non-members.

- Lockdown digital safeguarding for carers of secondary age children (16 July 2020)
<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events/training-events-and-workshops/lockdown-digital-safeguarding-carers-secondary-age>
- How to strive, survive and thrive during the Covid-19 pandemic (20 July 2020)
<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events/training-events-and-workshops/how-strive-survive-and-thrive-during-covid-19>
- Understanding Allegations and Safer Caring (22 July 2020)
<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events/training-events-and-workshops/understanding-allegations-and-safer-caring-1>
- Compassion Fatigue and Self-Care in Fostering (29 July 2020)
<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events/training-events-and-workshops/compassion-fatigue-and-self-care-in-fostering-1>
- Support for foster carers during the transition to the 'new normal' (29 July 2020)
<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events/training-events-and-workshops/support-foster-carers-during-transition-new-2>
- Support for foster carers to help children through the transition to the 'new normal' (30 July 2020)
<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/training-and-events/training-events-and-workshops/support-foster-carers-help-children-through>

6. **Blogs:** View our recent [blogs](#) (June 2020)

7. **The Fostering Network Member Helpline** - Our [helplines](#) are open as usual and ready to assist with any fostering related queries, including those arising as a result of coronavirus. You foster carers can also phone our confidential [stress support service](#).

- We are open as usual from 10 am - 3 pm, Monday to Friday call: 020 7401 9582 or Email: info@fostering.net
- **We are operating a call back service during the coronavirus outbreak.** Please leave us a message clearly and slowly stating your name and your telephone number, if you can repeat your name that is really helpful. We will always return your call and aim to do so within 24 hours, although it's normally a lot quicker than that.

Please also make use of the Government's dedicated coronavirus helpline: 0800 046 8687.

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