

Welfare Reform on the Web (June 2004): Child Welfare - UK

CHILDCARE: HOW LOCAL MARKETS RESPOND TO NATIONAL INITIATIVES

T. Harris, I. La Valle and S. Dickens

Department for Education and Skills, 2004 (Research Report; 526)

Reports results of a qualitative study of four local child care markets to assess the impact of the National Strategy introduced in 1998. The National Childcare Strategy has played a key role in putting childcare on the political map of local authorities with little previous involvement in the area. A long history of local authority intervention in, and subsidy of, childcare greatly assists the development of new services and expansion of existing provision. There is evidence of a need for intervention to mediate market forces which could lead to the emergence of provision available only to those who can pay. Major programmes such as Sure Start are playing a crucial role in expanding provision of daycare, but this may not survive when funding runs out. Out of school childcare is patchy and struggling to become financially viable.

CHILD POVERTY IN THE UK

Work and Pensions Committee

London: TSO, 2004 (House of Commons Papers, session 2003/04; HC85)

Currently 3.6 million children live in poverty in the UK. The government's target of reducing child poverty by a quarter in 2004 is likely to be met. Meeting subsequent targets (reduction in child poverty by a half by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020) will be much more difficult since their achievement will involve helping those most disadvantaged. In order to halve child poverty the poorest families require an extra £10.00 per week per child. The key to eradicating child poverty is to help parents into paid employment. This depends on the availability of affordable childcare. The government's goal should be making accessible and affordable childcare available to all by 2010.

CONNEXIONS STAKEHOLDER SURVEY: HEADLINE FINDINGS OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY OF PHASE TWO AND THREE CONNEXIONS PARTNERSHIPS

Department for Education and Skills

Nottingham: 2004 (Research brief; RBX05-04)

Sixty-seven per cent of adult stakeholders and 85% of young people agreed that their Connexions Partnership was making good progress in meeting its aims. Effective joint working was most commonly cited as one of the main achievements of Connexions Partnerships. Connexions had also given young people the opportunity to influence services provided. Resourcing issues were recognised as problematic by both adult stakeholders and young people. Lack of staff and insufficient time spent

with individuals, a reduction in service to the majority of young people, low awareness of the service and confusion about what various services do were commonly cited as problems by both groups.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF HEALTH VISITORS TO SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES AT HOME

N. Brocklehurst and others

Community Practitioner, Vol. 77, 2004, p.175-179

The article examines the role and contribution of health visitors in providing home-based support to vulnerable families. It focuses upon two main questions - firstly whether home visiting works, and, if so, whether there is still a role for health visitors in providing this support. It begins by defining "home visiting" before outlining a research study, due to end in August 2004, exploring the benefits and costs associated with an intensive home visiting programme delivered by specially trained health visitors in two counties in the south of England.

ENSURING A SURE START

F. Rehal and H. Langley

Community Practitioner, Vol. 77, 2004, p.168-171

Sure Start is a major government initiative which attempts to combat child poverty and enable children to achieve their potential, bringing together early education, child care and health and family support. The article reports on a Sure Start trailblazer programme in Thanet, North East Kent, which supports children and their parents living on the local Millmead council estate.

[EVALUATION OF TRANSPLAN FOR CONNEXIONS, DFES AND THE REGIONAL SEN PARTNERSHIP \(Word DOC file\)](#)

L. Todd, S. Humbleton and D. Crowther

2004

Transplan, produced in the North East Region, is a comprehensive guide to the process of transition planning as it impacts on young people with special educational needs.

[EVERY CHILD MATTERS: INSPECTING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: A DISCUSSION PAPER \(PDF format\)](#)

Ofsted

London: 2004

The paper presents proposals for the integrated inspection of education and social care services for

children. Proposals are subject to the passage of the Children Bill currently before Parliament.

EVERY CHILD MATTERS: A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

L. Goldthorpe

Child Abuse Review, vol.13, 2004, p.115-136

Author identifies some of the barriers which impede the transfer of information between professionals and notes the law's lack of clarity in this area. She also stresses the need to seek out and hear the views of children. Children's rights to express their views are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, although this is not yet incorporated into English law. When consulted, children emphasise the importance they attach to confidentiality. This may, of course, conflict with the professionals' need to share information.

FROM MARIA COLWELL TO VICTORIA CLIMBIÉ: REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC INQUIRIES INTO CHILD ABUSE A GENERATION APART

N. Parton

Child Abuse Review, vol.13, 2004, p.80-94

Analysis of the two reports shows how responsibilities of local authorities for child welfare have broadened in the thirty years between them. Professionals in health, social care and education now carry more responsibility but have relinquished much of the public respect that formerly facilitated their access to families and to information. This issue needs to be more openly acknowledged and addressed in both local and national contexts.

"LIKE A FISH IN A BOWL": PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

P. Dale

Child Abuse Review, Vol.13, 2004, p.137-157

Reports results of a small qualitative study of families' views of child protection services in a large rural authority in the Midlands. Fifty percent of the families reported some positive benefit from the intervention while 22% said that the services they received had caused them harm. From the families' perspective, factors associated with positive outcomes included availability of preventive services, crisis support and respite care, and actual materialisation of the support specified in child protection plans.

MAKING SURE THE CHILD IS HEARD. PART 1, HUMAN RIGHTS

The Honourable Mr. Justice Munby

Family Law, May 2004, p. 338-347

In an address to the National Youth Advocacy Service, Mr. Justice Munby examines children's rights with reference to Article 8 of the Human Right's Act, which protects "the right to respect for...private and family life". He considers a number of scenarios where this right must be balanced with the rights of the State, including sending the mother of a baby to prison and taking a child into care, and argues that children have as much right to representation in such cases as anyone else.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE VICTORIA CLIMBIÉ INQUIRY REPORT

P. Reder and S. Duncan

Child Abuse Review, vol.13, 2004, p.95-114

Article emphasises the demands made on practitioners by child protection work in terms of their skills and experience. Stresses that increased guidance, checklists and more sophisticated technology will not ensure the quality of professionals' communication with children nor the clarity of communication with other professionals. Argues that the training of child protection professionals needs to promote "healthy scepticism" and to develop in them styles of reasoning which integrate subjective and intuitive approaches with objective, scientific ones. Finally suggests that improved training and higher salaries could improve staff retention.

NEXT STEPS TO A BETTER OUTCOME

P. Thompson and J. Coughlan

Community Care, Apr.29th-May 5th 2004, p.36-38

Comments on provisions of the Children Bill, focusing on the role of the proposed new directors of children's services, the replacement of Area Child Protection Committees with local safeguarding children boards, integrated inspection, information sharing between agencies, regulation of private fostering, and reform of youth justice services.

ONE FAMILY'S FIGHT

K. Evans

Community Care, May 13th-19th 2004, p.42-43

A mother of two severely autistic sons describes her fight to obtain support from several different local authorities. There is a lottery of provision across the UK.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY - WHAT CHANGES?

P. Booth

Family Law, May 2004, p.353-355

The article considers changes to the legal definition of parental responsibility following the implementation of Section 111 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, with particular reference to the rights of fathers.

PARENTS TO GET TAX BREAK FOR PAYING NANNIES

S. Womack

The Daily Telegraph, May 17th 2004, p.7

Parents will receive tax breaks for employing nannies under plans announced today by Margaret Hodge, the Children's Minister. But controversially, those who trust only relatives, such as grandparents, to look after their children, will not qualify for any financial relief at all. The tax break is due to be introduced next April.

(See also The Independent, May 17th 2004, p.14; The Times, May 17th 2004, p.5; Financial Times, May 17th 2004, p.4)

THE POOREST CHILDREN NEED MIDDLE ENGLAND'S MOTHERS

P. Toynbee

The Guardian, May 26th, 2004 p.22

The author comments on encouraging early results for SureStart, Labour's programme of child care and family support. Yet SureStart is only planned for the poorest 20% of wards, reaching some but not all poor children. Labour has promised to make it universal someday and the author believes that promise should be a manifesto centrepiece.

REMAKING SOCIAL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: A CRITICAL DISCUSSION ON THE 'MODERNISATION' OF SOCIAL CARE

P. M. Garrett

London: Routledge, 2004

This book analyses some of the key themes of the 'modernisation' of social care introduced by the administrations of John Major and Tony Blair. These include:

- the *Looking after Children (LAC)* materials;
- the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*;
- 'working together' to protect children;
- the mainstream approach to 'race' and ethnicity in social work with children;
- the relocation of adoption at the heart of social work;
- the implications for social work of the emergence of 'personal advisors', mentors and related professional.

The author argues that political and ideological factors need to be taken into account if we are to understand the dominant discourses and evolving ways of working with children. Political fixation with ensuring that young people 'fit' into their allotted roles in a market economy and an overarching concern about children and criminality have been crucial in this respect. He concludes that while social workers and educators should be prepared to embrace change, they need to be critical agents, recognising the ever-present need to promote and foster democracy within the sphere of social welfare.

THE SEX TRAP

M. Clegg

Young People Now, May 12th-18th 2004, p.16-17

Young sex workers in the King's Cross area find themselves trapped in a cycle of homelessness, drug addiction and domestic violence from their pimps. The article describes how the Women's Open Space project is working to raise their self-esteem and help them to break the cycle.

TIME OF THEIR LIVES

K. Revoir

Community Care, May 6th-12th 2004, p.38

Detailed case chronologies can alert social care professionals to recurrent behaviours of looked-after children and improve provision of care. Following the Laming report into the death of Victoria Climbié, these are now compulsory.

TOEING THE LINE

L. Whitfield

Health Service Journal, vol.114, Apr.29th 2004, p.28-29

The Children Bill says that agencies should work together to cover all aspects of children's well being. Proposed national databases will be able to flag up children at risk. The Bill does not detail who can contribute to, or access, the proposed databases.

TONI-ANN CASE RAISES NEW CONCERNS OVER GUARDIAN'S EXPERIENCE

D. Hayes

Community Care, May 13th-19th 2004, p.18-19

Toni-Ann Byfield was shot dead in a London hostel together with convicted drug dealer Bertram Byfield, who was thought to be her biological father. The Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) had not appointed a guardian until after the third court hearing. The guardian had consequently never really engaged with the case. This has highlighted ongoing concerns about the level of experience, training, and qualifications of CAFCASS guardians.

WEB-BASED INFORMATION SYSTEM TO HELP ASSESS "AT RISK" CHILDREN

Anon.

Community Practitioner, Vol. 77, 2004, p.163

The article marks the launch of Ryogens, a web-based service that helps agencies and local authorities share information about at-risk children.

WHEN GOOD PARENTING DOESN'T BEGIN AT HOME

G. Redfearn

Young People Now, May 12th-18th 2004, p.9

Much bad behaviour on the part of young people stems from poor parenting. The article discusses the role of mentors in filling this gap.