

TheBigSource



The cabinet reshuffle: Clockwise from top left: Nicky Morgan, Philip Hammond, Michael Fallon, Liz Truss and Michael Gove

August 2014

After a short gap, we're pleased to announce that Big Source is back! In this issue you'll find a round up of lots of policy developments from June to date.

The contents are arranged alphabetically by policy area and there's some crossover between areas.

To read the links you will need to copy and paste them into your browser.

For anything relating to The Big Source please contact Emma Eaton on 0161 848 2426 or email emma.eaton@thebiglifegroup.com.

Past issues are available on the I drive: Group Information/Big Source
The Next Big Source will be available in October 2014.

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April 2014

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Childcare Payments Bill had its second reading in July and is now at the committee stage in the house of commons. It aims to introduce a new tax-free childcare scheme to support eligible parents with childcare costs.

- <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/childcarepayments.html>

The Government started consulting on an early years pupil premium which aims to help nurseries narrow the attainment gap between three and four year olds from low-income families and their peers. The Big Life group responded to the Government's child poverty strategy with the recommendation to make a pupil premium available to early years – we're glad they've taken our recommendation on board!

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-50m-fund-to-help-most-disadvantaged-3-and-4-year-olds>

A new child maintenance system is in force. Gingerbread have provided a basic explanation of the changes to the service now that the Child Support Agency has been replaced by the Child Maintenance Service along with a factsheet explaining the new system.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fairness-for-families-children-and-taxpayers-as-new-child-maintenance-system-is-launched>
- http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/factsheet/43/Using-the-Child-Maintenance-Service?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Gingerbread&utm_campaign=3522648_Pract+enews+June&dm_i=KP,23I3C,ARXYRB,7KCV2,1

The government has published a new easier-to-read Special Education Needs and Disability code of practice, which offers practical advice for councils, schools and hospitals to ensure they are providing the new support for these children and young people.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Children England put forward a shared public and voluntary sector vision for children's services.

- <http://www.childrenengland.org.uk/declaration-of-interdependence/>

The Pre-School Learning Alliance has published its Early Years Agenda which reveals wide-ranging concerns about the current direction of early years policy.

- <https://www.pre-school.org.uk/>

New research by the Department for Education shows children's centres are reaching over 90% of families most in need.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-families-in-need-supported-by-childrens-centres>

The National Children's Bureau published a survey based report which shows that parents and practitioners greatly value children's centres and the services they provide to families, and that their continued funding should be secured

- <http://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/ncbs-childrens-centre-debate>

Flaws in the Government's draft Child Poverty Strategy have been pointed out by leading government and third sector organisations: the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission see it as a missed opportunity; the Child Poverty Action group say it ignores the impact of its own welfare reforms and the Joseph Rowntree Trust argue it fails to set clear progress targets.

- <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/consultation-response-child-poverty-strategy-2014-17>
- <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/JRF-Child-Poverty-Strategy-submission-2014.pdf>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-the-consultation-on-the-child-poverty-strategy>

Key early years organisations have accused Ofsted of treating the sector differently to schools, further education and children's services after the inspectorate failed to bring the management of the service back in-house in line with its other remits.

- http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1144461/sector-slams-ofsted-inspection-plans?utm_content=&utm_campaign=030614_EarlyYears_MAN_BULL_PROMO&utm_source=Children%20%26%20Young%20People%20Now&utm_medium=adestra_email&utm_term=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cypnow.co.uk%2F%2Fcyp%25

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Centre for Mental Health published a review of progress to date and priorities for further development five years on from the Bradley Report. In 2009 the Bradley Report made 82 recommendations for improving the treatment of people with mental health problems and people with learning difficulties in the criminal justice system in England and Wales.

- http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/pdfs/Bradley_report_five_years_on.pdf

Police stop and search powers are to be overhauled, home secretary Theresa May has announced, with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act code of practice revised to 'make clear what constitutes "reasonable grounds for suspicion"'.

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27224887>

DISABILITY

A report by parliament's public spending watchdog, the public accounts committee has found that the government's handling of personal independence payments has been "nothing short of a fiasco" that has caused distress to thousands of sick and disabled people.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jun/watchdog-attacks-governments-handling-fiascoof-disability-payout>

The government has announced that hundreds of thousands of people have been hit by a benefits backlog, with more than 700,000 people waiting for an Employment Support Allowance assessment.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jun/hundreds-thousands-hit-benefits-backlog>

Research by The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education has revealed that by hiring and supporting disabled people on to their Apprenticeship schemes, employers have found that they are better able to extend the pool of high quality applicants available to them, engage with the widest possible consumer base and have a workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers they serve.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/archive/2014-05>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Polly Neate, chief executive of Women's Aid, calls for opposition to the widespread closure of women's aid centres.

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11013739/UK-domestic-violence-refuge-closures-the-most-dangerous-thing-of-all-for-women.html>

The Domestic Violence Law Reform Campaign is welcoming a statement by Prime Minister David Cameron announcing plans to improve the effectiveness of the law in dealing with domestic violence. The change would be expected to criminalise psychological abuse and the pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour, as urged by the Campaign organised by Women's Aid, the Sara Charlton Charitable Foundation, and Paladin.

- <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic-violence-press-information.asp?itemid=3293&itemTitle=Domestic+violence+Campaign+welcomes+Prime+Minister%92s+statement§ion=0001000100150001&preview=1>

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

A set of new pledges has been announced by the government as part of its 'responsibility deal' with the alcohol industry. They include an end to the sale of super-strength drinks in large cans and more 'responsible' displays and promotions in shops.

- <http://drinkanddrugsnews.com/category/news/>

Public Health England is consulting on whether parts of the 2007 Drug misuse and dependence: UK guidelines on clinical management – known as the 'orange book' – should be updated in the light of the evolving evidence base and changes in the sector

The Big Life group, 463 Stretford Rd, M16 9AB

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/drug-misuse-and-dependence-uk-guidelines-on-clinical-management>

A new legal high information website has been launched by Crime Reduction Initiatives aimed at young people, their families and professionals.

- <http://www.strangemolecules.org.uk/>

The findings of DrugScope's State of the Sector Report puts housing and employment at the core of recovery. The findings are from a survey of nearly 170 drug & alcohol services across England.

- <http://drinkanddrugsnews.com/category/news/>

A series of October events is being planned by Adfam to celebrate its 30th birthday, with a focus on campaigning against the stigma that affects families affected by drugs and alcohol. A campaign pack is available from the Adfam website, and the organisation is encouraging local groups and services to hold their own awareness-raising events.

- www.adfam.org.uk
- http://www.adfam.org.uk/cms/docs/Adfam_30th_Birthday_Campaign_Pack_-_Tackling_Stigma.pdf

Local authority areas with a high level of alcohol-related harm are the least likely to expect increased funding to tackle the problem, according to a new report from Alcohol Concern.

- <http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/media-centre/news/measure-of-change>

The safeguarding of children is not being sufficiently prioritised by professionals making decisions about drug treatment medications, says a new report from Adfam. Improved training is needed for treatment services, pharmacies, GPs and social workers to highlight the potential dangers.

- <http://www.adfam.org.uk/professionals/lat>
thebiglifegroup.com

EMPLOYMENT

The Institute of Public Policy Research, have proposed that the £1.2bn Work Programme, the government's flagship welfare to work scheme, needs to be broken up in the face of figures showing that as little as 5 per cent of unemployed people on the main disability benefit are finding a job through it.

On the Work Programme, the report concludes that the scheme is failing mentally ill people in particular; and adds that the task of helping those on Employment Support Allowance – the main disability benefit – to find work should be devolved to local authorities, with councils recouping some of the possible savings from the Department for Work and Pensions.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jun/work-programme-%E2%80%9Cfailing-those-most-need-and-should-be-broken-up%E2%80%9D>

ESA claimants, overall, continue to have low performance according DWP published statistics from the beginning of the Work Programme in June 2011 to the end of March 2014. It reports on the two-year job outcome performance i.e whether or not an individual has secured a job outcome during the entire length of time on the programme.

- http://www.cesi.org.uk/sites/default/files/response_downloads/WP_stats_briefing_Jun14_0.pdf

A network of housing providers share their experience, knowledge and good practice examples of how they deliver employment support and deal with the impacts of welfare reform.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/publications/strategic-approaches-employment-responding-change-sector>

This Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion report on its Fit for Purpose project, sets out how

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the employment support system can be transformed to create a system that offers employment opportunity for all. It gives twenty case studies of current good practice in organisations that work with and support disabled people and those with health conditions.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/publications/fit-purpose-transforming-employment-support-disabled-people-and-those-health-conditions>

HEALTH

A new interactive map showing the priorities of health and wellbeing boards across England has been produced by the Local Government Association (LGA). Users can either select a specific area to see a summary of local priorities or choose a theme to find out which areas are focusing on it. The aim is to support the boards and stimulate collaboration, says the LGA.

- <http://www.local.gov.uk/home>
- http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/health-and-wellbeing-boards/-/journal_content/56/10180/6111055/ARTICLE

Public Health England is re-launching the CLear assessment with new support for local organisations. CLear supports local public health organisations to review their current tobacco control efforts and develop further actions to reduce smoking rates. It also covers the assessment of commissioning and promotion of stop smoking services.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/enhanced-support-for-local-tobacco-control>

HOUSING

See Welfare Reform and Benefits for update on Bedroom tax interim report published by the DWP.
thebiglifegroup.com

Homelessness

Homeless people have been granted new exemptions from benefit sanctions under regulations laid before parliament. Under the new rules, Jobcentre Plus advisors will be given the discretionary power to exempt rough sleepers and those in supported accommodation from looking for work.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jul/government-eases-sanctions-homeless-people>

Sector experts are warning of a homelessness “time bomb” because increasing numbers of European migrants will lose their “transitional protection” for housing benefit over the coming months.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jun/%E2%80%9Ctime-bomb%E2%80%9D-warning-migrant-welfare-cut>

There are fears that homelessness is being given a lower priority by Government after it announced that new housing minister Brandon Lewis will not be responsible for tackling homelessness. The brief instead remains with former housing minister - and now more junior local government minister - Kris Hopkins.

<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/reshuffle-prompts-fear-homelessness-will-be-sidelined-in-election/7004915.article>

New research by St Mungo’s Broadway and supported by The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education has found that homeless people are being failed as children and adults when it comes to reading and writing.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jun/half-homeless-people-lack-reading-and-writing-skills>

were released on 19 June 2014, by the Department for Communities and Local Government .

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-homelessness-in-england-january-to-march-2014>

The latest national statistics on statutory homelessness, for January to March 2014,

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IMMIGRATION

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MENTAL HEALTH

More than half of councils have cut or frozen budgets for child and adolescent mental health, according to official figures obtained by Young Minds.

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-27942416>

The DWP are implementing four pilot schemes involving earlier mental health assessments and treatment, reports the Telegraph. Suggestions of adding mental health treatment to mandated activities on ESA have been discussed by Conservative politicians, but the BBC reports it remains an 'idea' for the future.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jul/mental-health-and-employment-service-pilots-launched-government-repor>
- http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/06/mental-health-treatment-job-support-benefits?CMP=tw_t_gu

The Department of Health is consulting on changes to the Mental Health Act Code of Practice. The new Code is designed to reflect the changes in health and care professional practice and ensure that practice meets the needs set out by Robert Francis, Camilla Cavendish and others.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-mental-health-act-1983-code-of-practice>
- http://www.adfam.org.uk/cms/policy_briefings/briefing118.pdf

SCHOOLS

The Government announced it will allocate £390 million of additional schools funding to try and address the unfair distribution of education spending.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fairer-school-funding>

The Government is increasing pupil premium funding in 2014/15 to help try and close the attainment gap facing disadvantaged children.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/raising-the-achievement-of-disadvantaged-children>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/28/pupil-premium-gcse-attainment-gap>

New guidance published by the government will help teachers better identify underlying mental health problems in young people – meaning fewer pupils will wrongly be labelled trouble-makers. A 2012 Centre for Mental Health report estimates around 15% of pupils aged 5 to 16 have mental health problems that put them at increased risk of developing more serious issues in the future.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mental-health-behaviour-guidance-to-be-issued-to-schools>

Nicky Morgan replaces Michael Gove as Education Secretary.

- <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jul/15/nicky-morgan-education-secretary-women-america>

Research suggests that improved performance at key stage by disadvantaged pupils in inner London can be explained by improvements in prior attainment at key stage 2.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-research-on-improved-results-for-disadvantaged-london-pupils>

TAX

Tax cuts proposed by Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives at the next election are not a cost effective way of helping low income working families, according to new analysis from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. They will cost the public purse at least three times as much as more targeted policies and fail to help families in greatest need.

- <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Wages-Taxes-Topups-FINAL1.pdf>

THIRD SECTOR

To make sure that more social ventures can benefit from social finance, an investment of £60 million for social investment “readiness” over the next decade has also been announced today. The investment will come from the loan book of a fund called Future Builders.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-major-boost-to-social-investment-sector>

Under new regulations, local authorities will be able to delegate social care functions to mutuals, community interest companies and other not-for-profit organisations to deliver children’s social care. The details are outlined in the government’s response to the consultation on powers to delegate social care functions published today.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-freedoms-to-help-local-areas-support-vulnerable-children>

WELFARE REFORM & BENEFITS

The government is set to update the way it talks to benefit claimants, following an independent review of benefit sanctions. A specialist team will look at

all communications – including claimant letters – and how to work more closely with local authorities and advice centres to simplify the system.

- <http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/jul/government-update-communications-benefit-claimants-sanctions>

Universal Credit is continuing its roll out to Jobcentres in the north west until the whole region is covered. A [commencement order](#) sets out details of expansion in June and July.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/north-west-universal-credit-expansion>
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1583/contents/made>

The Department of Work and Pensions published the ‘Evaluation of Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy: Interim Report’ which found that: The report found that the bedroom tax is causing rent arrears; The bedroom tax hasn’t resulted in large-scale downsizing to smaller homes; Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are not a sustainable solution

<http://www.housing.org.uk/policy/policy-news/bedroom-tax-not-working-dwp-report-finds/>

A Government reshuffle has taken place with key ministers moved into different positions.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministerial-appointments-july-2014>