

TheBigSource



The Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, has announced that treatment for mental health conditions will be brought into line with other NHS services with the introduction of the **waiting time standards** from April 2015. See page 8.

October 2014

In this issue you'll find a round up of the latest policy developments from August 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.

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Past issues are available on the I drive: Group Information/Big Source

The next Big Source will be available in January 2015.

TheBigSource

October 2014

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

September saw the **introduction of the Government initiative to expand free childcare** with the aim of doubling the number of disadvantaged two-year-olds eligible to receive 15 hours of free care a week from 130,000 to 260,000.

Childminder agencies also begin operating. Individual childminders will no longer have to be inspected by Ofsted, which will instead assess the quality of agencies.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1146293/education-childcare-reforms-effect>

Hundreds of thousands of **stay-at-home mothers will be encouraged to go to work** under Government plans to reform childcare in the UK. George Osborne, the Chancellor, wants to see nearly 500,000 more women in the workplace by the beginning of 2016.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/george-osborne/11181535/George-Osborne-gets-stay-at-home-mothers-back-to-work.html>

PM David Cameron has promised to put families at the heart of his government with a **test to ensure all domestic policies help family life**.

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/aug/18/david-cameron-family-policy-500000-troubled-families>

An **expansion of the Troubled Families initiative** is to focus on tackling poor health and supporting children under the age of five, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has revealed. This will include a heightened focus on tackling domestic violence, reducing debt and supporting children at risk of being taken into care as well as retaining a focus on reducing truancy, crime and antisocial behaviour. This follows the government's pledge to increase the number of families receiving intensive government support to turn their lives around from 120,000 to 500,000.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1146087/troubled-families-expansion-focus-children-health>

The Government is calling on **nurseries and other childcare workers to do more to help children from disadvantaged areas** to learn

The statistics show that overall 60% of children aged 5 are making good progress against the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP). However, the gap between those from the most disadvantaged areas and their peers has remained static at 12%.

The EYFSP is designed to ensure that all children are prepared and ready for school and life in modern Britain. It measures things like how children play together through to being able to count to 10 and write their own name. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nurseries-must-do-more-to-give-children-the-best-start-in-life>

Early years professionals look set to play a key role in **improving the literacy of disadvantaged children** as part of a new national campaign to boost reading standards. A coalition of organisations wants all five-year-olds to be reading well by 2020.

The Read On. Get On campaign aims to get all 11-year-olds reading well by 2025 and is backed by a report that finds four in 10 disadvantaged children are not reading well by the time they finish primary school, almost double the rate for children from more affluent backgrounds.

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/read-get>

Research shows that a **pre-schooled child has more chance of getting better exam results** and ultimately earning higher wages. The Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary (EPPSE) research shows children who go to pre-school are projected to earn £27,000 more during their career than those who don't. They are also more likely to get better GCSE results - the equivalent of getting 7 Bs compared to 7 Cs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-who-have-early-education-get-higher-gcses>

Spending on children's centres and early years services has been slashed by more than £400m in the space of just three years, government figures show.

Latest Department for Education (DfE) statistics reveal that councils have earmarked a total of £985.3m for Sure Start children's centres and early years services in 2014/15. That compares with £1,093.2m last year, a drop of £107.9m in 12 months, and a drop of £413.2m from the £1,398.5m that was forecast to be spent in 2011/12.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1147031/childrens-centres-funding-cut-gbp400m#>

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

There were more than **two million fewer crimes** in the past year compared with 2010, according to the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales. A decline in heroin use, unrecorded cybercrime and greater civility are among the reasons suggested for the drop. However, hate crimes are up 5% on the last year...so much for the civility theory.

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-june-2014/index.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/crime-continues-to-fall-under-coalition-government>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/aug/31/tough-case-mystery-britains-falling-crime-rate>

Prison suicides have increased with a 64% increase in the last year.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/1/prisons-suicides-inmates-ombudsman>

DISABILITY

MPs have called for the scrapping of the work capability assessment used to decide disabled people's eligibility for employment and support allowance. The Work and Pensions Select Committee found that eligibility tests for benefits are inaccurate and system fails to help claimants back into work.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmworpen/302/30202.htm>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/23/disability-fitness-tests-flawed>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2014/jul/24/stuck-in-dwp-limbo-better-off-dead-mandatory-reconsideration>

Research by Shaw Trust shows that there is a **huge local variation in disability**

employment rates ranging from 24% in the Liverpool area to 52% in Hertfordshire. Action to support more disabled people into work must be at the heart of plans for local economic growth the Trust argues.

<http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk/media-centre/news/closing-local-disability-employment-gaps-would-help-an-extra-two-million-people-into-work/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2014/aug/13/disabled-people-employment-local-enterprise-partnerships>

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Proposals to strengthen the **law on domestic abuse are now at consultation stage**. The new law will criminalise coercive and controlling behaviour as well as physical harm.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1146103/home-office-launches-consultation-strengthening-domestic-violence-law>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344674/Strengthening_the_law_on_Domestic_Abuse_-_A_Consultation_WEB.PDF

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is introducing a **new approach to inspecting drug and alcohol services**, which will 'reflect national priorities' and 'put people's recovery at the heart'. There is also a commitment to tailor inspections to the issues that matter to people using substance misuse services.

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/cqc-sets-out-new-plans-inspecting-substance-misuse-services>

The **6th UK Recovery Walk** took place on **13 September in Manchester**. The walk aims to **replace pessimism with the hope** and healing power of recovery, helping to combat the stigma associated with addiction. The Big Issue in the North And Living Well joined the walk raising awareness of their services and their commitment to raising the profile of recovery.

<http://www.ukrecoverywalk.org/the-6th-uk-recovery-walk-greater-manchester/>

Public Health England's alcohol, drugs and tobacco division has published a **joint strategic needs assessment support pack** to help local areas develop joint strategic needs assessments and local joint health and wellbeing strategies that effectively address public health issues relating to alcohol, drug and tobacco use.

For each topic area there are good practice evidence-based prompts to support local areas to assess need, plan and commission effective services and interventions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/alcohol-drugs-and-tobacco-joint-strategic-needs-assessment-support-pack>

There were approximately **230,000 more drug users in 2013/14** than the year before, according to Home Office data used in the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Male drug misuse deaths involving illegal drugs rose by 23 per cent, from 1,177 in 2012 to 1,444, while female deaths were up by 12 per cent to 513. The upward trend is in contrast to Scotland, which saw deaths fall by 9 per cent over the same period

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/drug-misuse-findings-from-the-2012-to-2013-csew>

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-health3/deaths-related-to-drug-poisoning/england-and-wales---2013/index.html>

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/vital-events/deaths/drug-related/2013/index.html>
<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jul/24/drug-usage-in-england-and-wales-201314-get-the-data>

A national **campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of new psychoactive substances (NPS)** – so-called 'legal' highs – among teenagers and young adults has been launched by the Home Office. This comes at the same time as a Royal College of Psychiatrists report suggesting that the scale of the new psychoactive substances problem may be greater than estimated, with services ill equipped to cope.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/campaign-launched-to-warn-of-risks-of-legal-highs--2>
<http://drinkanddrugsnews.com/category/news/>

A **free iOS app to allow people to calculate alcohol units** and calories has been launched by Drinkaware. It also provides personalised feedback as well as information on the health benefits of reducing consumption.

www.drinkaware.co.uk

New research claims children of **mothers who drink as little as four units** of alcohol in a day even once while pregnant are **at greater risk** of developing mental health problems and doing less well at school.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/11/prenatal-alcohol-consumption-linked-mental-health-problems>

EMPLOYMENT

The DWP has set out its commissioning strategy for 2014, outlining how it will work with providers and partners to deliver welfare to work services. The strategy largely reiterates that of 2008, with some additional references to using more innovative commissioning models for specialist provision.

At the same time the National Council for Voluntary Organisations has called for a major overhaul in the way welfare-to-work schemes are designed and paid for. The report argues that the Work Programme is not helping those with multiple or complex barriers, and voluntary organisations are well placed to provide support for those who are furthest from the labour market.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/aug/dwp-sets-out-future-commissioning-strategy>

<http://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/703-ncvo-next-work-programme-must-involve-charities-in-design-to-succeed>.

The future strength and stability of the UK economy is "under threat" as there has been a **long-term shift towards insecure, low-paying employment in many cities** across the country, according to thinktank the Centre for Cities.

A recent report, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, revealed the number of Britons employed in low-pay positions in UK cities jumped by more than 750,000 between 2001 and 2011.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/sep/long-term-shift-towards-low-paid-work-threatens-stability-uk-economy>
<http://www.centreforcities.org/research/2014/09/03/unequal-opportunity/>

People claiming benefits will be expected to undergo attitude tests to assess if they have a psychological resistance to work under new plans revealed by the employment minister. Esther McVey said benefit claimants will be profiled to see if they feel "determined", "bewildered" or "despondent" at the prospect of employment.

A pilot of the scheme is already happening at three job centres in the UK. If successful, a voluntary trial involving jobseekers from across 27 cities could commence to see if the scheme can predict whether someone will take work.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/sep/unemployed-be-given-%E2%80%98attitude-work%E2%80%99-interviews>

More than 90,000 **more young women than men are out of education, employment and training**. According to the latest figures, 418,000 women aged 18-24 compared with 325,000 men are considered NEET.

A report by the Young Women's Trust finds that the impact of being NEET for a woman is more significant and can last longer, with evidence showing that young women are NEET for longer than men – three years on average, versus two.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/sep/new-report-young-women%E2%80%99s-trust-crisis-young-womens-worklessness>
http://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/publications

A new report from IPPR looks at five **critical elements of the school-to-work transition** for young people – the role of employers, vocational education, apprenticeships, careers guidance, and the benefits system – and at lessons the UK can learn from European economies with better youth employment records.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/aug/improving-career-opportunities-britain%E2%80%99s-young-people-new-report-ipp>

George Osborne has announced **plans to transform the North of England into an economic "powerhouse"** with an investment of up to £15 billion.

The plan will form the "centrepiece" of his Autumn Statement later this year.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/aug/george-osborne-promises-%C2%A315-billion-investment-make-north-powerhouse>

Greater Manchester is to have an elected mayor to preside over regional issues, George Osborne has announced.

The move, agreed with leaders of the region's 10 councils, will give local politicians greater control over billions of pounds of public money. The mayor will oversee policies such as transport, social care and housing as well as police budgets.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-29876939>

HEALTH

Simon Stevens, the new chief executive of NHS England, has set out his vision for the NHS in the **NHS Five Year Forward View**.

He wants to see barriers being removed ending the divide between GPs with patients, and consultants within hospitals. The focus will be on new models to suit local needs not more top-down reorganisations. Price tag – an additional £8 billion by 2020.

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-29731646>
<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/23/nhs-radical-overhaul-hospitals-8bn-services>

The **first UK survey of the dental health of under-threes** has discovered shocking levels of tooth decay, with sugary drinks often to blame.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-phe-survey-finds-12-of-3-year-olds-have-tooth-decay>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/30/uk-toothache-why-children-losing-teeth>

Official figures suggest the **proportion of over-18 smokers fell** from 19.8% in 2012 to 18.7% in 2013.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/07/smoking-falls-lowest-level-uk-recording-started-1940s>

Public Health England's (PHE) National Cardiovascular Intelligence Network (NCVIN) has published its **first cardiovascular disease profiles** for each of the 211 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in England. The profiles highlight important facts about these conditions and include information on the leading risk factors such as smoking and obesity.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-cardiovascular-disease-profiles-published>

New figures from the Institute of Health Equity illustrate some **worrying signs for the future health of the nation**. Poor results, in particular for children's development and ensuring incomes are sufficient for people to live healthy lives, are likely to lead to increases in health inequalities in the future. New data for each local authority in England has also been developed in collaboration with Public Health England.

https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/Content/FileManager/marmotindicators2014/supporting_docs/press-release-2014-marmot-indicators.pdf
<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/uk/marmot-indicators-2014-supporting-documents>

HOUSING

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis has published a **new model tenancy agreement**, which could empower tenants to agree longer deals with their landlord.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-better-deal-for-hardworking-tenants>

Private sector rents have risen to a new all-time average high of £761 a month across England and Wales. So says a rent survey by LSL Property Services, which owns the Your Move and Reeds Rains estate agents.

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/sep/19/rents-rise-all-time-average-high-august-uk>

An investigation by the 'Who Benefits?' campaign has found that 16% of people supported by benefits said that a **landlord or letting agent had refused to let** them a property.

http://b.3cdn.net/smallaxelive/4b2948363ed6763c54_w0m6i2it0.pdf

The government's **plans to cap welfare spending are under pressure** from rising housing and incapacity benefit bills, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility.

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/oct/16/welfare-spending-cap-rising-housing-incapacity-benefits-bill-obr-tax>

HOMELESSNESS

The **number of families living in hostels and women's refuges is at its highest** level for six years, according to latest government figures. The number of families with children living in hostels or women's refuges is the highest it has been in six years.

There were 3,020 families with children in either hostels or women's refuges during the first quarter of 2014, the latest Department for Communities and Local Government temporary accommodation figures show.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1146014/families-hostels-rise>

A study by Crisis has found evidence that **assistance single homeless people receive** from Housing Options and homelessness services is inadequate. Eight mystery shoppers visited 16 local authorities across England to find out how single homeless people are treated.

http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/MysteryShopping_ExecSummary_Final_web.pdf

IMMIGRATION

The Public Law Project has successfully challenged the lawfulness of the government's plans to introduce a residence test for civil legal aid

<http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/News/Pages/Residence-test-for-legal-aid-found-to-be-unlawful.aspx>
http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/885180/140708_Residence_Test_Brief_For_Policy_Library.pdf

Landlords in the West Midlands are to be the guinea pigs for **immigration status checks on new tenants from December**. They will pilot area 'Right to rent' checks, which are a new measure introduced by the Immigration Act 2014. After the six months, the Government will decide whether to extend it to other areas. Guidance on the penalties landlords could face if they fail to do the checks were published on the government website but then removed. Homeless campaign groups have already raised fears that it will make it even more difficult for homeless people to find a place to live.

<http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/News/Pages/Landlord-checks-to-be-piloted-in-the-West-Midlands.aspx>
<http://www.crisis.org.uk/pressreleases.php/621/government-plans-to-check-immigration-status-of-renters-must-protect-homeless-people>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/failure-to-make-an-immigration-right-to-rent-check-penalty-guidance>

The Department of Health has published the Visitor & Migrant NHS Cost Recovery Programme: Implementation plan 2014-16, which sets out the department's plans for charging migrants for NHS healthcare, and how these will be introduced over the next two years. The No Recourse to Public Funds Network has set out some of the key consequences of the policy change.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covering-costs-of-nhs-healthcare-from-visitors-and-migrants>
<http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/News/Pages/Plans%20to%20extend%20and%20increase%20healthcare%20charges%20for%20migrants%20announced.aspx>

According to a new report, by University College London's Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, immigrants from the so-called new Europe, those 10 countries which joined the EU in 2004, contributed £4.96bn more in taxes up to 2011 than they took out in benefits and use of public services.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-29906592>
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/nov/05/eu-migrants-uk-gains-20bn-uci-study>

New immigrants from the EU will only be able to claim welfare payments for three months under new plans by David Cameron. The prime minister has announced the further tightening of the rules for new arrivals claiming benefits, saying that the "magnetic pull" of UK benefits had to be addressed so people came for the right reasons and the rules "put Britain first".

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/aug/david-cameron-halve-time-eu-migrants-can-claim-benefits>

More than one in three families with **children initially earmarked to be deported from the UK had the cases against them dropped**, official figures show. A report by the Independent Family Returns Panel found that between April 2012 and March 2014, 242 out of the 649 families with children that were identified as illegal immigrants and set to be returned to their home country were not pursued for deportation by the Home Office.
<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1147342/dropped-deportation-cast-doubt-home-office-decision#>

Over **10,000 children seeking safety** from war, violence and persecution with their families are **being pushed into poverty** by alarmingly low-levels of support, new analysis from The Children's Society reveals.

Financial support for families seeking asylum in the UK has been frozen since April 2011. As a result, asylum seekers have faced a 7.5% cut in real terms as a result of rising costs for food, clothing, and other basic necessities over the past three years.

http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/asylum_support_briefing_stats_july_2014_finaldraft.pdf

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Housing welfare support and planning and development have been at the **sharp end of local government spending cuts** according to a Chartered Institute of Housing policy expert.

<http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2014/sep/17/housing-spending-cuts-local-government-welfare>

MENTAL HEALTH

The Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, has announced that treatment for mental health conditions will be brought into line with other NHS services with the introduction of the **first ever waiting time standards**.

For the first time, from April 2015, most patients needing talking therapies – for conditions like depression – will be guaranteed the treatment they need in as little as 6 weeks, with a maximum wait of 18 weeks. There will also be £120 million to improve mental health services.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-ever-nhs-waiting-time-standards-for-mental-health-announced>

The We Need to Talk coalition has found that a **significant number of people are waiting unacceptable amounts of time for treatment**.

An online survey of more than 2,000 people who had tried to access therapy in the past two years found that one in 10 had waited over a year between referral and assessment, while 41% had waited more than three months.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/16/mental-health-patients-unwell-waiting-talking-treatment>

Chief Medical Officer Professor Dame Sally Davies makes **14 recommendations to improve public mental health services** in her annual report. **Technological innovations in mental healthcare feature prominently**.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officer-cmo-annual-report-public-mental-health>

A new report by IPPR North argues that people with mental health problems, who make up 40 percent of those going through the work capability assessment (WCA) process, are **being let down by the system**.

<http://www.ippr.org/publications/in-safe-hands-evaluating-employment-pathways-for-esa-claimants-with-mental-health-problems>
<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/aug/people-mental-health-conditions-are-being-failed-employment-support-a>

The incoming president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Professor Simon Wessely has highlighted the **failure to treat many people** with common mental health problems.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/aug/13/two-thirds-britons-not-treated-depression>

POVERTY

Research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) shows that **high housing costs made a significant contribution** to pushing 14.6 million people (23.2% of the population) into absolute poverty in the UK in 2012-13. The IFS forecasts that 2.5 million more people could be in poverty by 2020 unless a joined-up coordinated approach is taken.

<http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/7274>

Despite a strong economic recovery and a record number of people in work the statutory **target to eradicate child poverty by 2020 will be missed**. That's the conclusion of the Government's Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission second annual State of the Nation 2014 Report. It goes on to make 12 recommendations for change.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/state-of-the-nation-2014-report-published>

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has set out the its **case for tackling poverty** and outlined policy options available to governments. It plans to produce the UK's first costed, evidence-based anti-poverty strategy (for all ages) at the end of 2015.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/a-uk-without-poverty>

Low wages, benefits cuts and the rising cost of raising children are leaving **full-time working families struggling to afford a basic standard of living**, a report by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has found. The report, *Cost of a Child in 2014*, which was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, found the income of families in full-time jobs at the national minimum wage is 18 per cent short of the basic amount needed to achieve a minimum standard of living. For those out of work the shortfall is 43 per cent, according to the report that says the cost of raising a child has risen by eight per cent since 2012 for a couple and 11 per cent for lone parents.
<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1145976/families-dont-earn-live>

Britain is the only country in the G7 group of leading economies where **inequality has increased this century**, according to the annual Credit Suisse global wealth report. The amount of the country's wealth controlled by the richest 10% increased to 54.1% this year, up from 51.5% in 2000.
<https://www.credit-suisse.com/ch/en/news-and-expertise/research/credit-suisse-research-institute/publications.html>

SCHOOLS

From September the Government introduced **free school meals for all infant school-age children**. All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 receive a free hot lunch. Many aspects of the new special educational needs and disability (SEND) system have also been introduced.
<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1146293/education-childcare-reforms-effect>

Anti-Bullying Week 2014 will run from 17-21st November with the theme 'Let's stop bullying for all'. Campaign packs are available from the anti-bullying alliance.
<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

THIRD SECTOR

A group of leading UK social investment experts, have set out their **vision for developing the UK social investment market**.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-welcomes-social-impact-investment-report>

<http://www.socialimpactinvestment.org/reports/UK%20Advisory%20Board%20to%20the%20Social%20Investment%20Taskforce%20Report%20September%202014.pdf>

In his first speech as Minister for Civil Society, Brooks Newmark has set out the **challenges for social action** and current Government initiatives to support it.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/people-helping-people-the-future-of-public-services>

Analysis by the Smith Institute think tank of five recent instances where NHS, local government and police services were contracted out shows that in each case that the key objective of **offloading services into the private sector was to make cost savings** in direct response to steep public spending cuts.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2014/sep/22/outsourcing-same-job-same-hours-less-pay>

<http://smithinstitutethinktank.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/outsourcing-the-cuts-pay-and-employment-effects-of-contracting-out.pdf>

WELFARE REFORM & BENEFITS

The Local Government Association, with assistance from *Inclusion*, has launched an **online tool to track welfare reform** across the UK.

The tool allows the user to tailor their report according to single tier, district and county local authority geographies. It gives an overview of the impacts of welfare reform, looking both at key indicators that help to determine the impacts of welfare reforms, and a quantification of these impacts.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/oct/local-government-association-launches-tool-track-impact-welfare-reform>

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced a round-up of evidence from the first year of a **study into the effectiveness and morality of welfare sanctions**.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Welfare-conditionality-UK-Summary.pdf>

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/media-centre/new-job-opportunities-should-not-be-traded-against-welfare-jrf-65843>

Official figures for the first quarter of 2014 showed **sanctions on Employment and Support Allowance claimants were some 4.5 times higher** than in the same quarter in 2013 - although the 2014 figure still includes those appealing.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/aug/%E2%80%98shocking-increase%E2%80%99-esa-sickness-benefit-sanctions-says-crisis-charit>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-28776102>
<http://www.crisis.org.uk/pressreleases.php/618/crisis-responds-to-huge-rise-in-cruel-benefit-sanctions>

New JSA claimants will have to wait a full week to make a claim, rather than the current 3 days. This change will save £50m from welfare spending next year.

The Independent reports accusations aimed at government ministers of **pushing 300,000 people to pay day lenders** as these benefit changes come into force.

In the Government's social security advisory committee impact assessment it was found that 280,000 new recipients of Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) will bear the brunt of the cuts. It calculated that JSA claimants would lose around £40 each and ESA claimants around £50 each.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/oct/independent-government-accused-forcing-unemployed-financial-black-hol#>

The **government has promised to reconsider** its controversial decision to scrap a £180m-a-year welfare hardship fund used to provide emergency support for some of England's poorest citizens.

The U-turn follows ministers' unexpected announcement earlier this year that they would abolish local welfare assistance funding in April 2015, just two years after it was introduced as a replacement for the Social Fund.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/sep/government-reconsider-scraping-%C2%A3180m-social-welfare-grant-fund-repor>

Liberal Democrat and Labour MPs have joined forces to defeat Conservatives in a Commons **vote to partly overturn housing benefit changes**.

Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs joined up to send the affordable homes bill, sponsored by Andrew George MP, through to a second reading vote by 306 to 231. Seventy Conservative MPs ignored a three line whip and stayed away from Westminster. Angie Bray, Tory MP for Ealing Central and Acton, voted against her party.

Lib Dem MP Andrew George's private member's bill will now move to detailed scrutiny at the committee stage.

Mr George's bill would mean people who could not be found a smaller home would be exempt from the cuts, as well as disabled people who need a spare bedroom or who have adapted homes.

<http://www.cesi.org.uk/social-inclusion-news/2014/sep/tories-defeated-benefit-bill-clears-first-commons-hurdle>

A woman who was worried she would have to move out of her house or pay extra to stay because of the bedroom tax killed herself, a coroner has ruled.

Stephanie Bottrill, 53, had raised a son and daughter in her three-bedroom council house in the West Midlands but was living there alone after her children moved out.

On the day before she died, she told her doctor that she felt she was being pushed into choosing whether to move or to stay and face the prospect of paying extra, the inquest in Birmingham was told.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/aug/12/stephanie-bottrill-worried-bedroom-tax-committed-suicide-coroner>