

# *TheBigSource*

**February 2016**

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**I:\Group Information\Big Source**

# TheBigSource

## February 2016

### EU Negotiation

The British Prime Minister is currently negotiating for an amended settlement for the United Kingdom to remain in the European Union (EU). As part of this negotiation, a draft settlement has been agreed (2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016).

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/02/02-letter-tusk-proposal-new-settlement-uk/>

This draft settlement will need to be ratified by each member state. Following ratification there will be a referendum for the UK to remain in the EU. One specific change is that the in-work benefits of EU migrants will be curbed for four years, being gradually restored the longer people stay in the UK. EU migrants will be able to send child benefit back home, but would get a lower level if the cost of living in the country where the child lives is lower.

### GM DEVOLUTION UPDATE

On 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015, Greater Manchester Combined Authority published a final draft of its comprehensive plan for health and social care: **'Taking Charge of our Health and Social Care in Greater Manchester'**

[https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/download/35/taking\\_charge\\_of\\_our\\_health\\_and\\_social\\_care\\_in\\_greater\\_manchester](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/downloads/download/35/taking_charge_of_our_health_and_social_care_in_greater_manchester)

Up until the publication of the final document in

March 2016, people across Greater Manchester will be able to give their views on the Plan via

<http://www.gmhealthandsocialcaredevo.org.uk/tell-us-what-you-think>

### CHILDREN & FAMILIES

#### Adoption

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the government announced that it will seek to change legislation as soon as possible to make it explicit that councils and courts must place children with the person best able to care for them up until their 18th birthday. Furthermore, increased government funding will be made available to:

- speed up adoptions of harder-to-place children
- support the creation of new regional adoption agencies to improve the recruitment of adopters
- strengthen voluntary adoption agencies
- ensure social workers have the right knowledge and skills to make robust decisions about the best placements for children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-unveils-plans-to-change-adoption-law>

#### Social Care

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the Department for Education published a paper outlining the government's reform programme for children's social care services in England over the next 5 years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-reform-a-vision-for-change>

Reforms will be structured around three areas:

- **People and leadership** – giving workers knowledge and skills for undertaking the work; developing leaders equipped to facilitate practice excellence.
- **Practice and systems** – creating the right environment for practice and innovation to flourish.
- **Governance and accountability** – making sure that what is being done is effective, using data to show strengths and weaknesses in the system, and developing innovative new service models with the potential to improve services.

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016, Ofsted launched point in time questionnaires for social care services (children's homes, fostering services, adoption agencies, adoption support agencies or residential family centres). They want to get as many views as possible from children and young people, adults who use services, staff, parents, carers and professionals, about the effectiveness and quality of these services. The closing date for contributions is 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/point-in-time-questionnaires-for-social-care-services>

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### Coercive or controlling behavior

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, a new offence of **coercive or controlling behavior** came into force. The consequence of this is that victims who experience the type of behaviour that stops short of serious physical violence, but amounts to extreme psychological and emotional abuse, can bring their perpetrators to justice. The offence will carry a maximum of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coercive-or-controlling-behaviour-now-a-crime>

## DRUGS/ALCOHOL

### New Alcohol Consumption Guidelines

In January, new guidelines for alcohol consumption were produced by the UK chief medical officers. The major change is in the guidance for men who are now recommended not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol each week; this is the same level as for women.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-alcohol-guidelines-show-increased-risk-of-cancer>

**Public Health England** have recently published detailed information on harmful drinking and alcohol dependence

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-harmful-drinking-and-alcohol-dependence/health-matters-harmful-drinking-and-alcohol-dependence>

### The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

At the end of January 2016, **The Psychoactive Substances Act (2016)** received Royal Assent. The Act will prohibit the production, supply and importation of psychoactive substances; police and other law enforcement agencies will be given greater powers to tackle trade in psychoactive substances, and offenders face up to seven years in prison.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-law-to-tackle-psychoactive-substances-passed>

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **NHS apprenticeships**

On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016, it was announced that 200000 new apprentices will be created within the NHS by 2020. The roles will be in a range of areas including:

- nursing and healthcare assistants
- IT, estates and facilities
- domestic and housekeeping services
- business administration and accounting

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-nhs-apprenticeships>

This commitment follows the launch of the government consultation to make 2.3% of workers in large public sector bodies apprentices

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-sector-apprenticeship-targets>

## **IMMIGRATION**

### **'Right to Rent': Landlord Checks**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016, government's **Right to Rent** scheme went live across England. The new rules require landlords to carry out checks on all new adult tenants to make sure they have the right to rent property in the country

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/right-to-rent-goes-live-across-england>

## **HEALTH**

### **Evening and Weekend GP Appointments: Manchester**

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, The **Manchester Primary Care Partnership** announced that

Manchester GPs have launched a new service offering additional GP appointments at evenings and weekends. This service is available for anyone registered with a Manchester GP; the new evening and weekend slots are available at 15 GP sites across the city.

<http://manchesterpcp.co.uk/documents/7DayServiceLaunch.pdf>

### **CQC – Consultation on 5-year strategy**

The **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** – regulators of health and social care services – is currently developing its strategy for the next five years. To assist with the CQC has launched a public consultation, which is open until 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

<https://webdataforms.cqc.org.uk/Checkbox/2016strategyconsultation.aspx>

## **HOMELESSNESS**

### **Government Measures to Tackle Homelessness**

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015, The Department for Communities and Local Government announced a package of measures to help tackle homelessness. These include

- maintaining and protecting homelessness prevention funding for local authorities, through the provisional local government finance settlement totalling £315 million by 2019 to 2020
- increasing central government funding for homelessness programmes to £139 million over the Spending Review period
- a commitment to work with homelessness organisations and across departments to consider

options, including legislation, to prevent more people from becoming homeless

- £40 million from the Department of Health to refurbish hostels and provide low cost shared accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness
- £30 million extra to councils to give them more control and flexibility over homelessness budgets by devolving the funding for managing temporary accommodation from 2017 to 2018
- a £5 million fund to the 25 local authorities facing the greatest pressures in moving people out of temporary accommodation and into a settled home

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/radical-package-of-measures-announced-to-tackle-homelessness>

### **Homelessness Change and Platform for Life Funds**

In December, the **Homes and Communities Agency** announced allocations made under the Homelessness Change and Platform for Life Funds 2015-2017.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-change-and-platform-for-life-funds-2015-to-2017-allocations>

## **HOUSING**

### **Housing Associations: Right to Buy Pilot**

As of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016, 5 housing associations are delivering a pilot scheme for tenants to apply to own their homes.

The pilots are being delivered by:

- **L&Q** – Croydon LBC, Enfield LBC, Greenwich LBC, Haringey LBC,

Lambeth LBC, Lewisham LBC, Newham LBC, Southwark LBC

- **Riverside** – Liverpool CC, Halton BC, Knowsley MBC, Sefton MBC, St Helens MBC, Wirral MBC
- **Saffron Housing** – South Norfolk DC
- **Sovereign** – Cherwell DC, West Oxfordshire DC, Vale of White Horse DC, South Oxfordshire DC
- **Thames Valley Housing Association** – Guildford BC, Hart DC, Runnymede BC, Rushmoor BC, Woking BC

The pilot will help inform the design and implementation of the main scheme before it is rolled out across the country following the passage of the **Housing and Planning Bill**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-association-tenants-take-first-step-to-homeownership>

### **Shared Ownership**

From April 2016, the government is relaxing the criteria for those who can apply for the shared ownership scheme. Under the new measures the scheme will be opened up to people of any occupation while income caps will also be raised, meaning families earning up to £90,000 in London and £80,000 elsewhere could be eligible.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shared-ownership-boost-for-budding-homeowners>

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

### **Developing mental health services for veterans in England**

The NHS provides 12 mental health services across England specifically for veterans. The services started in 2010 after publication of **Fighting Fit: a mental health plan for**

**servicemen and veterans**, a report by former Surgeon-Commander, Dr Andrew Murrison MP. The contracts for most of these services are due to end in September 2016, and NHS England has launched a public consultation to gain insight to develop the services further. The consultation closes on *31<sup>st</sup> March 2016*.

<https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/veterans-mental-health-services>

### **Mental Health Act Report**

On *10<sup>th</sup> December 2015*, the CQC published **Monitoring the Mental Health Act in 2014/15**, an annual report into the use of the Mental Health Act (MHA)

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/content/mental-health-act-annual-report-201415>

The key findings were:

- Providers must manage and monitor their use of the MHA better
- Understanding and improving the way the Mental Health Act is being applied for patients must be a priority for all
- There is unacceptable variation in the way providers are applying the Code of Practice
- Providers are failing to make sure patients receive the support they need to be involved in their care
- Greater priority needs to be given to deaths in detention

### **Prisoner Mental Health**

The **Prisons & Probation Ombudsman** has published an independent investigation into prisoner mental health. The report was published in January 2016 and identified 25 lessons.

<http://www.ppo.gov.uk/wp->

<content/uploads/2016/01/PPO-thematic-prisoners-mental-health-web-final.pdf>

## **SCHOOLS**

### **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

The Government has launched a public consultation (closing date *22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016*) on proposed changes to the statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education**.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education-proposed-changes>

This guidance was originally published in July 2015, and the intention is to finalise the updated guidance in September 2016. The proposed changes require all schools to:

- have appropriate filters and monitoring systems, so that no child can access harmful content via the school's IT systems and concerns can be spotted quickly
- ensure that they teach their pupils about safeguarding, including online

### **School Admissions System**

On *25<sup>th</sup> January 2016*, the government announced it is taking further action to simplify the school admission system. Measures will include:

- preventing objections to a school or local authority's admissions arrangements from outside the local area
- preventing vexatious complaints against faith schools from secularist campaign groups
- requiring admissions authorities to consult on their admission

arrangements every 4 years rather than  
the current 7

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-to-get-greater-say-in-the-school-admissions-process>