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| **Minding the Gap - News Brief: No. 142** |
| **Universal Credit: Getting to First Payment**The Department for Work & Pensions has rolled out Universal Credit to replace six means-tested benefits for working-age households: Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. This report examines how the DWP is managing the process of getting to first payment in Universal Credit. The report explains how the process of getting to first payment works and considers the impact on claimants / It goes on to assess its performance in paying first payments on time, cost-efficiently and without fraud and error, in the period before COVID-19 and assess whether the Department supports claimants effectively through the initial claim processThe report suggests that many people claim Universal Credit at a challenging time in their lives. As such, the initial wait, which is an inherent part of Universal Credit’s design and operational processes, does not cause all the issues that claimants may face but, in the context of many claimants’ existing financial difficulties, can exacerbate their problems and that the Department needs to better understand and address the needs of vulnerable people and those with more complex claims, who may be at greater risk of struggling under the Universal Credit regime.[Report](https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Universal-Credit-getting-to-first-payment.pdf) |
| **Building a Country that Works for All Children post Covid-19**The provision of services for children and families relies upon a whole range of partners, including police, health, schools, charities, business and community groups, while multiple government departments, agencies and bodies have oversight of children and family-related policies nationally. As we move into the recovery phase, there are a myriad of strategic and practical considerations as well as risks requiring careful co-ordination, ongoing dialogue and a shared understanding of bottlenecks in the system so that contingencies or mitigations can be put in place.The purpose of this short discussion paper is: to put children, young people and their lived experiences of Covid-19 front and centre in national recovery planning; to articulate what is needed to restore the public support services they rely on; and to capture the positives and gains made during a very complex national, and indeed, global emergency. It is clear that the pandemic, ensuing lockdown and enduring social distancing measures have simultaneously exposed and heightened the impact of stark disparities between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers, from ill health and poor-quality housing to children’s access to technology and therefore opportunities to learn at home.[Discussion Paper](https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_Building_a_country_that_works_for_all_children_post_Covid-19.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11677797_NEWSL_HMP%202020-07-17&dm_i=21A8,6YAN9,FLWQCU,RZJWZ,1) |
| **Levelling Up Yorkshire and Humber: Health as the New Wealth Post-Covid**The role of health in driving economic and inclusive growth in the Yorkshire and Humber region and recognise the clear linkages between health and wealth – we know that a healthy population is a productive and prosperous one and vice versa. This report provides a plan to tackle ever-increasing socio-economic inequalities and boost health outcomes in Yorkshire and the Humber by encouraging and supporting more cross-sector working. Health and the economy are bound tightly together, and interventions designed to improve health, inclusive growth and wellbeing in Yorkshire and the Humber are in the interests of all local, regional and national partners, businesses and communities and should be a shared priority and endeavour.[Report](https://www.nhsconfed.org/-/media/Confederation/Files/Publications/Documents/LevellingUpYorkshireandtheHumberReport130720.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11677797_NEWSL_HMP%202020-07-17&dm_i=21A8,6YAN9,FLWQCU,RZG9J,1) |
| **Urgent Action is Needed to Reduce Widening Inequalities in Childhood Obesity**Inequalities in obesity prevalence by deprivation are widening in all age and sex groups. For example, between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the percentage of Year 6 boys with obesity from the most deprived quintile has risen from 25% to nearly 30%, double the prevalence within the least deprived quintile where obesity rates have slightly declined to just below 15%. The same pattern is seen among Year 6 girls, with obesity rates rising from around 22% to 24% in the most deprived quintile compared with a slight fall to 11% in the least deprived.This article suggests that any obesity strategy must place tackling the root societal drivers of poor health and wellbeing at its centre, taking a cross-government and cross-sectoral approach to health inequalities.[Article](https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/07/13/urgent-action-is-needed-to-reduce-widening-inequalities-in-childhood-obesity/) |
| **Exposed, Silenced, Attacked: Failures to Protect Health and Essential Workers During the Covid-19 Pandemic**At this difficult time our health, social care and essential worker communities have played an extraordinary role in the response to the pandemic. Across many countries, they have risked their health, wellbeing and lives, and often worked in very difficult circumstances and with very little support, to ensure that people are able to access the essential services they need, including health care, food and other essential supplies, and emergency public services. This paper argues that despite this, health, social care and essential workers have faced enormous challenges in doing their jobs, while governments have not adequately protected them. Shortages in personal protective equipment have meant that these workers have often had to perform their jobs without adequate protection and in unsafe environments. In some cases, they have not received fair remuneration and compensation and have often experienced high workloads and increasing anxiety and stress as a result. When they have tried to speak out about these concerns, many have faced repression and other forms of reprisals from the state and from their employers. Health, social care and essential workers have also been subject to physical attacks and have faced stigma due to the jobs they do which has made it harder for them to access essential services such as housing. This report looks at concerns around occupational health and safety, repression and other forms of reprisals, and violence and stigma for health and essential workers. It also flags some broader structural issues in health and social support systems across the world that have exacerbated these challenges and must be urgently addressed as well.[Report](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL4025722020ENGLISH.PDF?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11671188_NEWSL_HMP%202020-07-14&dm_i=21A8,6Y5JO,FLWQCU,RZA62,1) |
| **No DSS: Landmark Court Ruling Declares Housing Benefit Discrimination is Unlawful**For a long time, letting agents and landlords have been putting in place so-called ‘no DSS’, ‘no benefits’, or ‘no Universal Credit’ policies to prevent renters who receive housing benefit from accessing homes.   This article explains that under the Equality Act, it is now unlawful to indirectly discriminate based on things like gender, disability or race. ‘No DSS’, ‘no benefits’ or ‘no Universal Credit’ policies breach the act via indirect discrimination, as they disproportionately harm women and disabled people, who are more likely to receive housing benefit.  [Article](https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2020/07/no-dss-landmark-court-ruling%E2%80%AFdeclares%E2%80%AFhousing-benefit%E2%80%AFdiscrimination%E2%80%AFis%E2%80%AFunlawful%E2%80%AF/) |
| **Obesity: Time for Action** Around a third of children aged 2 to 15 in the UK are overweight or obese. Children are becoming obese at an earlier age, staying obese for longer and children from lower income household are more than twice as likely to be obese than those in high income households. This is a population health and an inequalities problem. This article argues that in order to tackle obesity, a new strategy needs to leave ideology aside and respond to the weight of evidence that all the tools in the toolbox are needed – from prevention, through to treatment and management, and from product formulation to advertising and the design of our towns and cities. Countless reviews and experience from around the world show that there is no silver bullet, instead serious action across all these fronts is needed.[Article](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2020/07/obesity-time-action) |
| **Communities Verses Coronavirus: The Rise of Mutual Aid**The COVID-19 pandemic has led to tens of thousands of people losing their lives in the UK, stretched the capacity of public services, altered everyday life for millions, and ground our economy down to a standstill. Yet the public response to the crisis also inspires hope. Thousands of spontaneous Mutual Aid groups have emerged to support the most vulnerable people in our society. These groups have been supplying food and medicine, connecting with people who feel isolated, and organising community resources for the benefit of all. In many cases they have been able to reach people more quickly than traditional public services and help them with a wider variety of needs. In this way, the Mutual Aid phenomenon is a powerful demonstration of ‘community power’.This report is an initial study capturing the most immediate lessons generated by the experiences of communities during the COVID-19 crisis. The report concludes with five key lessons that have emerged from our research and some recommendations for the future of Mutual Aid after the crisis[Report](http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/wp-content/uploads/Communities-Vs-Corona-Virus-The-Rise-of-Mutual-Aid.pdf) |
| **How can Loneliness and Social Isolation be Reduced Among Migrant and Minority Ethnic People?**While loneliness is increasingly recognised as a social problem with significant implications for mental and physical health, research addressing these issues within migrant and ethnic minority groups is limited and there is reason to believe that these populations may face increased risks. The project examined the various approaches to tackling loneliness that have been developed and tested with migrants and ethnic minority people. The findings of the research have been brought together in diagrams, pictures and words[Graphic booklet](https://issuu.com/niftyfoxcreative/docs/social_solation___loneliness_amongst_migrant___eth?fr=sYjEzNTEyOTI2ODM)[First Look Summary](https://njl-admin.nihr.ac.uk/document/download/2032790) |
| **Covid-19 and the Nation's Mental Health**Covid-19 is increasing the level of psychological distress and the mental health impacts are greatest among those most closely affected. This includes people living in areas where there are local outbreaks of the virus and people with long-term physical or mental health conditions.The briefing warns that the combination of a possible rise in Covid-19 cases combined with seasonal flu, the absence of financial safety nets such as the furlough scheme, and a no-deal Brexit may affect the whole UK economy and have a major knock-on effect on mental health.[Report](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/covid-19-nations-mental-health-july-2020) |
| **Exploring the Vulnerability to COVID19 Between Communities in England**This paper assesses the association between mortality from COVID-19 in each area and the proportion of the population from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, living in care homes, living in overcrowded housing and having been admitted in the past 5 years for a long-term health condition, whilst adjusting for the age profile of each area and accounting for the regional spread and duration of the epidemic. The model was then used to produce the Small Area Vulnerability Index (SAVI) for each MSOA that indicates the relative increase in COVID-19 mortality risk that results from the level of each of the 4 vulnerability measures for each MSOA.The findings indicate high levels of vulnerability to COVID-19 are clustered within the North West, West Midlands and North East regions. Control measures and policies to shield certain groups need to take into account these factors targeting resources and proportionate to the greater needs experienced by some communities.[Paper](https://pldr.org/2020/06/18/exploring-the-vulnerability-to-covid19-between-communities-in-england/) |
| **Alcohol and COVID-19: Tackling Problem Drinking after Lockdown** This is a virtual Zoom webinarMonday 27 July 2020, 10.30am - 12.00pm The impact of the last four months on the nation’s drinking habits has been well documented. Further research, published by Alcohol Change UK on 3 July, reported that a quarter of drinkers are drinking more now than before lockdown. Experts have warned that failure to tackle problem drinking during the COVID-19 pandemic could result in increased harm for a generation.Local authorities and alcohol recovery providers have worked hard to keep services accessible during lockdown and will continue to do so. Local and national leaders are keen to build on previous work to create healthier and fairer communities; strategies for tackling problem drinking will play an important part in this.This webinar will provide an opportunity to understand the latest evidence on alcohol consumption as we emerge from lockdown and possible social and health impacts. We will also discuss the approaches and actions both local and national leaders should take to tackle problem drinking, especially in relation to supporting the most vulnerable and reducing alcohol related health inequalities.Who should attend: Elected Members, Chief Executives, Directors of Adult Social Services, Directors of Public Health and Public Health Commissioners[Book here](https://lgaevents.local.gov.uk/lga/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=323410&eventID=948&traceRedir=2) |
| **English Councils Call for Smoking Ban Outside Pubs and Cafes**Councils are calling for smoking to be banned outside pubs, cafes and bars to make them more family friendly and help high streets recover from lockdown, but the government seem to be opposed to the ban.[Article](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jul/18/english-councils-call-for-smoking-ban-outside-pubs-and-cafes?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other) |
| **Time To Be Radical? The View from System Leaders on the Future of ‘System by Default’**There has been understandable speculation about the extent to which COVID-19 will impact on the move to system working, and the introduction of integrated care systems (ICSs) that was set out in the NHS Long Term Plan. Given the uncertainties, the NHS Confederation’s ICS Network have started discussions as to what next steps systems themselves would like to see, as we begin to look beyond the emergency response to COVID-19 and towards a coherent future vision for system by default. This report sets out the results of polling of system leaders conducted during the ICS Network’s joint session in June 2020, on a range of issues relating to the future of system by default. In total, 40 responded to our poll, representing approximately half of all STP and ICS chairs and leaders nationwide. The results indicate that since the outbreak of the pandemic there is a growing appetite for significant strengthening of system working, with an increasing number moving away from the current voluntary partnerships approach in favour of more formalised working arrangements. There is also a strong sense that local authorities need to be equal partners in ICSs and not an afterthought.[Report](https://www.nhsconfed.org/-/media/Confederation/Files/Publications/Documents/ICS-Network/ICS-Network-Time-to-be-Radical.pdf?la=en&hash=21208CDA12F37B769EFB500F6219A1CAA34DEB7D&utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11677797_NEWSL_HMP%202020-07-17&dm_i=21A8,6YAN9,FLWQCU,RZG9J,1) |
| **New Guidance: Delivering Safe, Face-to-Face Adult Day Care**As the restrictions of lockdown are eased, this guide aims to support you, day care managers, social workers, commissioners and providers, to restart or continue activities. It is focused on community-based day services, day centres (with and without personal care), including specialised day centre environments, and those with outdoor spaces.[Guidance](https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/day-care/safe-delivery?utm_campaign=11670486_SCIELine%2013%20July&utm_medium=email&utm_source=SOCIAL%20CARE%20INSTITUTE%20FOR%20EXCELLENCE%20&utm_sfid=0030f00002sMD4JAAW&utm_role=Policy%2Fpublic%20affairs&dm_i=4O5,6Y506,RO4ANM,RYB5S,1) |
| **At Least 16 Homeless People have Died of Coronavirus**Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released today shows the number of recorded coronavirus deaths of homeless people in England and Wales up to 23 June, with most deaths occurring in London and the North West.According to the figures, six people in London died from the virus, while three deaths were recorded in the North West. There were no homeless deaths in the whole of Wales.[Article](https://www.wlm.org.uk/news/at-least-16-homeless-people-have-died-of-coronavirus-new-data-reveals) |
| **Using Marmot Principles to Tackle Health Inequalities and COVID-19, 23 June 2020**The pandemic, and the wider governmental and societal response, have brought these health inequalities into sharp focus. There is early evidence which suggests that some of the social determinants of health, including obesity, ethnicity, deprivation, poor mental health, and socio-economic status are contributing to higher levels of COVID-19 related deaths. Measures to control the spread of the virus are likely to have significant longer term implications on health inequalities, related morbidity and mortality of certain groups of people, for example those experiencing social isolation, financial insecurity and domestic abuse.How do we mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on more deprived and excluded groups?This webinar will explore the health inequalities exposed by COVID-19 and look at how they can be addressed.This webinar is accompanied with the presentation slides are available using the link.[Webinar](https://www.local.gov.uk/using-marmot-principles-tackle-health-inequalities-and-covid-19-23-june-2020) |
| **Marmot Review 10 Years On**It has been ten years since the publication of The Marmot Review, for the first time in more than 100 years life expectancy has failed to increase across the country, and for the poorest 10% of women it has actually declined. Over the last decade health inequalities have widened overall, and the amount of time people spend in poor health has increased since 2010. #Marmot2020 confirms an increase in the north/south health gap, where the largest decreases were seen in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in the North East, and the largest increases in the least deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in London.There are a number of key points made within the report, but the principle point I would like to make is that, the more deprived the area, the shorter the life expectancy. This social gradient has become steeper over the last decade, and women in the most deprived 10% of areas for whom life expectancy fell from 2010-12 and 2016-18. There are marked regional differences in life expectancy, particularly among people living in more deprived areas, a general point is that the North is doing worse than the South.Mortality rates are increasing for men and women aged 45-49 – perhaps related to so-called ‘deaths of despair’ (suicide, drugs and alcohol abuse) as seen in the USA. Child poverty has increased with children’s and youth centres have closing and the reduction in funding for education. There is a housing crisis and a rise in homelessness, people have insufficient income to lead a healthy life and there are more ignored communities with poor conditions leaving people with little reason for hope, aspiration and tangible possibility to improve their lot!Marmot Review 2020[Executive Summary](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Health%20Equity%20in%20England_The%20Marmot%20Review%2010%20Years%20On_executive%20summary_web.pdf)[Full Report](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2020/Health%20Equity%20in%20England_The%20Marmot%20Review%2010%20Years%20On_full%20report.pdf) |
| **Research Funding for Local Authorities****The** NIHR have re-released a call for funding for small projects to assess how research can support local authorities: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/2030-local-authority-research-system-call-commissioning-brief/24480>.  The focus is to explore how current, or new, systems could be developed, at a local level, to support sustainable and influential research activity in/with local authorities. The intention of this award is to explore how better to support research into the wider determinants of health that are influenced by local government such as urban planning, local transport, economic growth, housing, education, environmental health and leisure facilities.The deadline for applications is Friday 6 August 2020, at 1pm.General questions about the call and guidance should be emailed to: phr@nihr.ac.uk. |
| **Marmot ‘Ten Years On!’ (Conference Postponed until the Spring)****Venue: Leeds City Hilton Hotel, Neville Street, Leeds, LS1 4BX,****Date: Monday, 21st September 2020** |
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