



Recovery Plan – Safeguarding and Child Protection

Summary of key points

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the wellbeing and safety of children, adds additional stresses on families and increases concerns about online harms. It has also brought into sharp focus a number of existing shortcomings in the child welfare system.

To address the impact of COVID-19 on safeguarding children now and in the future we recommend that the Government:

- **Ensure that all children at risk are reached with an offer of help.** Local safeguarding partnerships should be supported to put in place local recovery plans, mapping the key impacts of COVID-19 on safeguarding children in their areas and specifying actions to address those.
- **Invest in children's services capacity to safeguard children.** A comprehensive COVID-19 recovery plan for vulnerable children is needed, backed with appropriate long-term investment to stabilise the system and enable local authorities to rebalance spending towards high-quality preventative services and early intervention and address the issue of children's social care being underfunded before the pandemic hit.
- **Ensure that all vulnerable children are supported to go back to education.** A 'Back to Education' plan for vulnerable pupils is needed to ensure they are prepared, ready and able to engage with schools. This must, include a focus on vulnerable children who will be transitioning between nursery and school, primary and secondary school, or secondary school and colleges to ensure that their new education place is aware of any additional safeguarding or support needs children and families have.
- **Put experiences of children and families at the heart of future responses.** The current response has left many children at increased risk of abuse and neglect, as they have been at home isolated from supportive wider family, friends, teachers or other professionals. Learning from experiences of children and families should inform any planning for future responses to COVID-19 or other pandemics.
- **Be ambitious in national policy changes.** As a result of COVID-19 many important policy developments have been put on hold. This work must continue now without any further delay with the Government setting an ambitious timetable for legislative and policy changes to address online harms and improve responses to children experiencing domestic abuse, sexual or criminal exploitation, violence or those who go missing.

1. Introduction

This briefing sets out the principle concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on the safety and well-being of children and the ability of agencies to respond to situations where children are at risk of harm within their

family unit, or from others online and in communities. It outlines short-term and long-term actions that national and/or local government should prioritise to protect children in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

There were 52,260 children subject to a child protection plan in England as of 31 March 2019, in which a child protection conference has determined they are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. There were 399,500 children in need at 31 March 2019, requiring support in order to safeguard or promote their welfare. This includes children requiring help as a result of child or adult disabilities, parental mental ill health or the family experiencing financial or other stresses. 54% of children in need have been assessed as having experienced or being at risk of abuse or neglect from within their family or from exploitation outside the home, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups. Not included in these statistics are many more vulnerable children¹ and families facing adverse circumstances.

The strategies in place to keep children safe range from early intervention services for families and children to responses to children at risk of significant harm.

Even prior to the pandemic there were concerns that the safeguarding system was 'overstretched and overwhelmed'² and unable to meet the growing safeguarding pressures, brought about by: persistent cuts to local authority budgets – by £2.2 billion since 2010³; increasing levels of hardship faced by families; growing understanding of, and responsiveness to, sexual and criminal exploitation of children; as well as increases in the number of adolescents with complex needs coming to the attention of services.⁴ This resulted in the most high risk cases being prioritised, reduced availability of early intervention support for children and families⁵ and variations in support with an unevenness in practice and standards across local authority areas.⁶

The Care Crisis Review concluded a culture of blame, shame and fear is inhibiting effective partnership working between the state and children and their families - an underlying principle of the Children Act 1989 - resulting in a rising number of children in the care system. The most recent triannual review of the serious case reviews also highlighted the pressures on the system of increasing complexity of caseloads and the impact of austerity on inability to provide consistent, relationship based social work.⁷

The recovery planning should not be about going back to how things were before. It should be built on an understanding of pre-COVID-19 shortcomings and aiming to address these. The voices of children, young people and families must be at the heart of the process. We will need renewed investment in the services, support and workforce that they rely on.

2. Emerging concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on safeguarding of children

There is very limited data available currently about the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on children and families. Concerns outlined below reflect both the data available and on evidence from practitioners working directly with families and children collected through the online form.⁸

Low visibility of children during lockdown

Risks within the home have not lessened during COVID-19 and for some children will have heightened. With more children not in school it is crucial that a degree of safeguarding oversight is maintained in the community. The NSPCC helpline, a service available to the public for raising concerns about children, has seen an increase in contacts since lockdown; the proportion of contacts that have merited referral to statutory bodies has also risen compared to the period immediately preceding lockdown.⁹

There are concerns about diminishing support systems for children at risk and parents under stress during the crisis, including closure of face to face community and voluntarily based support and therapeutic services during the crisis and limitations in their capacity to operate even remotely due to practical and funding constraints going forward.

Participation in education and extra-curricular activities makes children 'visible' to services, with a high number of new referrals made to children's services coming from education settings. There is a concern that with schools, early year provision, colleges and some pupil referral units closed for the majority of children, opportunities for teachers and other professionals to identify and support children who face abuse, neglect, exploitation are more limited, which may lead to new or escalating risks for some.

DFE data shows that 47,000 of the children in attendance on 4 June had a social worker. They estimate this represents 15% of all children and young people classified as 'Children in Need'.¹⁰ While families may have a very valid reason for not sending children to school in light of messaging from the Government and a desire to limit children's exposure to the virus, low attendance rates combined with reduced support from services and increased pressures on families raises concerns about safeguarding incidents going unnoticed.

We are also very concerned about the safety and wellbeing of 'hidden' 0-2s, an issue that has been given insufficient attention in wider discussions on supporting vulnerable children during lockdown. Nursery closures and reductions in health visiting services will mean that contact with early years professionals will be much diminished, or non-existent, at this time.

Impact on the child protection services

The frequency and consistency of contact of children's social care services with children and families has been impacted by COVID-19 related sickness levels, staff in different agencies being redistributed to cover areas that were deemed a priority for response, usually focussing on high risk cases, and local authorities juggling priorities within their collective caseloads. Many voluntary sector organisations that support children and young people have had to suspend their activities, and in some cases furlough employees.

These changes have significantly impacted relationship based working with children and their families, with child welfare processes involving families often taking place by phone rather than face to face. In some cases this has led to diminishing opportunities for partnership working to both identify and effectively address needs and risks and maximise the chances of children being able to safely live within their family networks. Whilst in some other areas partnership working between agencies around safeguarding has improved.¹¹

Engagement has continued through digital platforms for many individual children facing extra familial risks, particularly where the level of risk was identified as high. Anecdotal feedback from practice suggests that for some young people this way of engagement was welcome and beneficial. While for others, particularly those who share small living space with big group of people and lack private space for digital engagement, this type of support is insufficient. Some support workers also reported that the efforts of building trusting relationships with the young person have been undone during the lockdown due to the loss of face to face sessions.

We are concerned about the impact on children and families of freedoms and flexibilities introduced through the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI445). This is set out in more detail in the care briefing but we support their recommendations that these must expire on 25 September 2020 and that plans must be put in place backed with appropriate investment to build the capacity of the child welfare and care system to respond to the needs of children at all times. In the meantime where local authorities are using these flexibilities, this must be made clear to any child, young person and families affected, and this should be documented.

These flexibilities have added to the already significant variations in responses and, support available for children and families in different places. Family Rights Group notes from their advice line that there has been significant variation in practice across the country, for example, in relation to friends and relatives taking on the care of a child who may not be able to live safely at home during the pandemic. In some cases placements with family have been expedited or kinship assessments progressed virtually, in other cases all work with the family has all been put on hold.

Lack of support for families under stress

The impact of the crisis has been particularly harshly felt for some families under stress. This includes vulnerable expectant or new parents, most of whom are young and some of whom are themselves care experienced. In many areas there has been reductions in support services available during pregnancy and post birth, including midwifery services and also face to face domestic abuse and substance misuse services, which may have mitigated risks and provided reassurance to social workers. In some cases, babies have been removed without their mother being able to even have regular physical contact, with potentially lifelong ramifications for the child and the parents.

Family Rights Group's study has found that 50% of kinship carers were having to isolate during the first months of lockdown due to themselves or someone in their household having an underlying health conditions. More than half the children they were raising had additional educational needs or disabilities. The carers' expressed concerns about the children's mental health and development during lockdown, and the consequences for the children if they contracted the virus. Financial hardship was a common theme, and few reported receiving any practical help.

Children in domestic abuse situations

Before lockdown, over eight hundred thousand children in England were living in households that reported domestic abuse.¹² The devastating impact of domestic abuse impacts children's well-being¹³, may lead to increased risks of criminal behaviour, interpersonal difficulties in future intimate relationships and friendships, and risks of experiencing sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and other forms of violence and abuse in later life.¹⁴

There are concerns that the current lockdown is placing children at increased risk. Refuge reported a 700% rise in calls to its National Domestic Abuse Helpline in a single day.¹⁵ The number of domestic homicides is far higher than the average rate for the time of year.¹⁶ Contacts to NSPCC's Helpline about children experiencing domestic abuse also increased by 10% during the lockdown period.¹⁷

Even before the crisis, recent research from Action for Children shows support for children affected by domestic abuse was patchy.¹⁸ The current crisis has exacerbated existing problems. Despite concerns about increasing levels of need among children, 60% of service providers that responded to Women's Aid COVID-19 survey stated that they needed to reduce/cancel their service offer for children.

Victims of child sexual abuse

Prevalence studies for England and Wales suggest that some 15% of girls and 5% of boys experience sexual abuse before the age of 16. The most serious and repeated offences are more likely to be committed by known persons, with family members being more common for girls and young women and authority figures for boys and young men.¹⁹ The recent Joint Targeted Inspection Report into Multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment highlighted the lack of prioritisation for the prevention and identification of sexual abuse and inconsistency in protection and therapeutic recovery.²⁰

For some children who experience sexual abuse by someone outside their household, the lockdown situation brought positive protection from abuse, for others who may be residing in the same household as their abuser, this results in traumatic events that will be difficult to escape.

Child victims of criminal exploitation

Last year 3,218 children were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) due to concerns about them being exploited sexually or criminally, including through the County Lines model.²¹ The true figure may be as high as between 30,000 to 50,000 young people.²² Pre-COVID-19 research from The Children's Society highlighted many gaps in responses to children who are criminally exploited, including the lack of statutory definition of child criminal exploitation (CCE) and children being viewed and treated by statutory agencies as offenders and not as victims.²³

Anecdotal evidence from practitioners on the ground suggest the COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in changing patterns of how children are trafficked and exploited. While some young people might have been more visible to police during the lockdown period, there are also reports that criminal groups adapted how they are trafficking children between different locations. There is increased reporting of criminals using private vehicles instead of public transport links, or exploiting children within their localities, making detection of exploitation less possible. Practice reports highlight that for those most vulnerable to exploitation by County Lines the level of risk remains high and that there is also an increase in debt bondage in families using drugs.

Practitioners working directly with children are concerned that children may be targeted for criminal exploitation through social networks and online platforms that children rely on for education and for social contact during lockdown.

Children missing from home

The principal trigger for children going missing from home is problems with family relationships.²⁴ These may be exacerbated by the current restrictions on movement which mean that families are obliged to spend more time together, at a time when the additional stresses within households (e.g. due to the financial implications for parents who are unable to work) are increasing. Another reason for children going missing is being groomed for exploitation by someone outside their family. In 2016/17 police forces in England and Wales recorded 66,545 children and young people going missing from home or care. Many repeatedly with 179,953 incidents recorded.²⁵ There are no more up-to-date numbers available on missing children, including on children missing during the pandemic.²⁶

While many return home interview services reported decrease in referral at the beginning of lockdown, currently the number of referrals is returning to pre-COVID-19 levels. At the same time practitioners report that families did not report their children as missing out of fear that they would be fined for breakdown of lockdown rules, highlighting the tension between safeguarding and law enforcement.

Practitioners report that missing children are less likely to go to relatives or friends than prior to the pandemic, due to those people shielding. Therefore, children more likely to be at risk of relying on strangers or sleeping rough.

Since the pandemic concerns were raised about the lack of safeguarding responses to children housed in unregulated accommodation who go missing from that accommodation. No additional guidance has been issued by the Government on how to safeguard missing children during the pandemic leading to variations in responses across the country.

Young carers

There are an estimated 800,000²⁷ young carers across England, under the age of 18, providing care for somebody with a condition, illness, disability, serious injury, mental health condition or addiction.

Significant numbers of families have been impacted by reduced or cancelled 'Care Packages'²⁸. Either families themselves have cancelled their schedule of care provided by a local agency as they fear the spread of the virus through agency workers entering their home or the care agency provider has reduced or cancelled home visits due to not having sufficient Personal Protective Equipment for their teams. This includes care for adults with acute mental health needs in places only being supported over the phone.

An outcome of the reduction of care packages is that many young carers are experiencing an increase in caring responsibilities; including giving personal care, using hoists, lifting and giving and managing medication, giving emotional and mental health support, managing challenging or changeable behaviours of loved ones; among other additional and increased caring activities. It also increased the mental health needs of young carers themselves.

For many young carers school closures presented a relief. They and their families will require support to enable young carer feel confident to return to education.

Increase in online risks

As children have spent more time at home the role of social media and online platforms as played an important role in communication, education and entertainment. While this interconnectedness has many important benefits, the lack of safeguards means that is also presents unnecessary risks to children. The NSPCC has set out the potential for a three-fold 'perfect storm' which could lead to a spike in online child abuse. Firstly, workforce pressures mean platforms are have faced challenges sustaining their moderation processes, and therefore relying on artificial intelligence (AI) that is often used to triage but not make final decisions on issues such as grooming. Secondly, the stresses placed on children by the pandemic may increase their vulnerability to grooming.²⁹ Thirdly, intelligence from Europol and the National Crime Agency points to an increased threat.³⁰

We are now seeing these risks translate into evidence of actual harm. In April 2020, there were over 4 million reports to National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), four times the recorded rate in April 2019.³¹ The Internet Watch Foundation reported that in the first four weeks of lockdown, industry takedowns of child abuse URLs fell by a considerable 89 per cent.³²

Pressures on the family justice system

The family justice system is navigating the complexity of how and when to operate on a remote basis. The challenges that this represents for access to justice are reflected in the fourth version of guidance³³ issued by Mr Justice Macdonald since mid-March 2020 and the decision of the President of the Family Division, to request that the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory support a rapid consultation into the use of remote hearings.³⁴

Parents and relatives who are represented cannot meet with their lawyer in the normal way to discuss their case. Whilst video conferencing and email may mitigate some situations, digital poverty is a major barrier to many parents being able to access legal advice and participate in discussions about their case. In addition, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has since 26 March 2020 suspended all casework activity.³⁵ In the coming months there is likely to be a backlog of cases and greater uncertainty for children and families awaiting the resolutions.

3. Planning recovery responses

COVID-19 has brought about additional significant stresses on families, including child and adult mental and physical ill-health; strains of increased poverty and financial difficulties as household bills increase and income falls. These additional stresses may result in additional safeguarding needs.

As the lock down restrictions are being gradually lifted through the summer it is expected that more safeguarding incidents will start coming to the attention of services. Whilst referrals to children's services temporarily dipped at the start of the crisis, these are now rising. The number of children and families requiring help is likely to further increase over the coming months as more children return to school. There are also concerns that some cases of online grooming may progress to contact abuse.

Recovery planning should be about helping families recover from the impact of COVID-19, including through a child-centred and family focussed safeguarding response. The Care Crisis Review found that there is consensus that relationship building has been and is at the heart of good practice. This is even more important in guiding how we recover from the pandemic. The challenge for all of us, including local and national government, is how to create the conditions that allow good relationships to flourish everywhere, within and between agencies, within families, and between families, children and practitioners.

3.1. Short term response (between now and early autumn when all children return to schools)

Ensuring social care support reaches all who need it

- Local safeguarding partnerships, with support from the Government, should put in place **local recovery plans** mapping the key impacts of COVID-19 on children who are, or may have become, at risk and specifying actions to address this. The plans should include, among other things:
 - an agreed process between the local authority and other organisations working with children in the area, such as education establishments or charities, to identify children and families who may require support as a result of COVID-19 and ways this support can be provided;
 - steps to ensure that a whole spectrum of interventions is offered from early support to support for children at risk of significant harm;
 - measures to ensure that where needed young people at risk have access to a trusted professional who can advocate for them.
- The Government should work with local safeguarding partnerships to **assess the capacity of social care workforce and local partners in voluntary sector to respond** to local needs. The Government should address any shortages that may emerge through investment in the workforce, sharing good practice across areas, training. Addressing capacity issues is particularly important in light of concerns that some voluntary sector and community provision has been negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- Local authorities should ensure that children who have experienced abuse during lockdown are protected, and have access to **coordinated therapeutic recovery** services and a child centred justice system that does not retraumatise.
- Many vulnerable adolescents, including those who experience sexual or criminal exploitation, will be becoming adults during this time. Local authorities should ensure that there is clear **transition planning between children and adult social care services** to ensure that vulnerable adolescent receive support as they turn 18.

Enabling vulnerable children to attend education provision, including school, colleges and alternative provision

- Local authorities should work together with schools to enable vulnerable children to attend school and help overcome barriers that may prevent children attending. This must include provision of appropriate care packages for families with young carers, and resolving practical arrangements of getting child to and from school as well as providing information of what steps are taken to make schools safe for children.
- The government should work with local authorities to prepare a **'Back to Education' plan for vulnerable pupils** to ensure they are ready and able to engage with schools when they re-open. The plan should include a specific focus on vulnerable children who will be transitioning between nursery and school, primary and secondary school, or secondary school and colleges to ensure that their new education place is aware of any additional safeguarding or support needs children and families have.

Resuming face to face contact with children and families

- In relation to children at risk of harm, face to face contact should resume, if safe, to rebuild or strengthen relationships and reassess needs and interventions. The government and local authorities should work together to ensure that appropriate and sufficient PPE provision is available and give advice on ways to promote safe contact, including how to make more spaces available in the community for face to face contact in a safe and socially distant way.
- Local authorities should ensure that **children and families receive appropriate information** about the safety of face to face contact, to address worries they may have, and provide information about changes to services and the rationale for such changes.

Setting a timetable for national policy changes

During the COVID-19 crisis many of the national policy changes previously announced were put on hold. The Government should set a timetable of when work that started before the pandemic will resume, or when the following policy changes will be introduced:

- Sexual Abuse Strategy
- Missing children's guidance
- Victims' legislation
- Serious Violence legislation
- Online Harms legislation
- Extension on independent of child trafficking guardians across the country
- Extension of legal aid to special guardians in private law cases
- Plans around improving standards and oversight of unregulated accommodation

3.2. Setting longer term responses

There are concerns that in the autumn as children return to education, more safeguarding concerns will come to light. Additionally, families may be experiencing new difficulties with the predicted rise in unemployment. This is expected to lead to increased pressures on children's services and the safeguarding system. All of the actions recommended as short-term responses above will still apply but additional actions are needed to address the issues in the long term and to prepare for any future pandemic or, indeed, the next wave of the current one. We recommend that the following actions should be considered by the national or local government.

Learning from the current response and addressing long-term outcomes

- The government should commission an **independent review of how the child welfare system has responded to the pandemic** and assess the long-term impact of COVID-19 on children and young people, their safety, health and wellbeing and long-term prospects. Considering the disproportionate impact of this pandemic on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds the review should specifically look at the impact and responses to children from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The Government must commit to take steps to address issues identified by the review. This review needs to include children, families, practitioners with experience or a stake in the system.
- Despite the challenges and unevenness in support to children and families, some local authorities have found ways of delivering effective support to families even during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example supporting expectant parents or parents of newborns at risk of their child being permanently removed; offering families a family group conference; working with extended family networks to ensure support for children; reaching out to vulnerable adolescents at risk of exploitation. The Government needs to help document **learning from and sharing of effective practice delivered during the pandemic** across all areas.
- Alongside the national review, local authorities should draw directly on the **experience of children, young people and families, including kinship carers, during the crisis in order to inform their priorities**, policies and services through reviewing data about access to services and listening to the voices of children and families. This should include focus on positive changes for some individual children and families that were prompted by the lockdown, for example, reduced substance use, improved relationships, improved wellbeing where certain stressors were removed from a child's or family's lives. Plans need to be put in place on how to sustain those positive changes for individual families and learning documented to inform how families and children are supported in the future.

Reconsidering social care support through digital means

- The COVID-19 pandemic has shone the light on the **importance of digital technology for safeguarding children**. It proved highly effective and beneficial for some but less appropriate for others. The government, together with local authorities, should review and assess the use of technology in safeguarding responses. They should provide guidance on how technology may continue to be utilised in the future, and consult with children and families on when it is inappropriate to rely on digital means.
- The Government should consider provision of technology to vulnerable children and families as a part of future social care responses.

Planning ongoing response to COVID-19

- COVID-19 is an ongoing pandemic. The current response has left many children at increased risk of abuse and neglect, as they have been at home isolated from supportive wider family, friends, teachers or other professionals. Vulnerable children should be prioritised in any plans for possible future developments of the pandemic. An improved cross-government response, built on learning from responses to COVID-19, should seek to ensure consistency of approaches across the country, with all care and education settings proactively identifying vulnerable children and supporting their attendance.

Providing sufficient funding for children's social care

- The government needs to recognise the vital work of children's social care workers and use the upcoming Spending Review/Round to begin the process of rebuilding children's services. It should recognise that after the pandemic, many local authorities will no longer be able to rely on the reserves they previously used to cover their children's services funding/spending gaps. **Long-term investment is needed to stabilise the system** and enable local authorities to rebalance spending towards high-quality preventative services and early intervention and address the issue of children's social care being underfunded before the pandemic hit.³⁶
- The Government should develop a **comprehensive COVID-19 recovery plan for vulnerable children** that includes ring-fenced funding for local authorities and charities to commission and deliver key services, including early intervention, to families when lockdown measures are lifted. Funding should be allocated based on the likely level of need in an area, to ensure that local authorities, charities, and schools are adequately resourced to provide the necessary support.

Reducing online risks

- The government should commit to having a world-leading **Online Harms Act on the statute book within 18 months** to address the existing weaknesses in online platform moderation and their poor design choices leading to greater risks of child online exploitation.

Responding to children affected by domestic abuse

- The Government must act upon the knowledge that the pandemic has further increased the need for provisions set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill, particularly for children. The proposed statutory **duty on local authorities must be extended to community-based services so children can access specialist domestic abuse support**. The Government must ensure that support for child victims of domestic abuse is central to its COVID-19 response, and that their needs are considered when allocating additional funding to victim support services.

Responding to children affected by criminal exploitation

- The law must be clarified to ensure that children who are groomed, coerced and controlled into committing crime are seen as victims of abuse and exploitation and there is a greater focus on early intervention and disruption of exploitation.

¹ Office of the Children's Commissioner for England (2019). *Childhood vulnerability in numbers*. Available at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childhood-vulnerability-in-england-2019/>

² Care Crisis Review: options for change (2018) London: Family Rights Group

³ Funding alliance recent paper https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/childrens-and-young-peoples-services-funding-and-spending-report-2018-19_1.pdf

⁴ Safeguarding pressures ADCS

⁵ Care crisis review, Funding pressures report, Counting lives

⁶ Ofsted (2020). The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2018/19. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/859422/Annual_Report_of_Her_Majesty_s_Chief_Inspector_of_Education_Children_s_Services_and_Skills_201819.pdf

7

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869586/TRIENNIAL_SCR_REPORT_2014_to_2017.pdf

⁸ <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SOAKNBzYq06lpLdJH6ikCHR939zAbv9Aq3l6KKCCb1xUNVhYUks1WTE5MVc2VTNUMkw1SEFLWThQTS4u>

⁹ NSPCC 2020

¹⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/890949/Attendance_figures_coronavirus_covid_19_4_June_2020.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/reports/covid-19-and-early-help/>

¹² Office of the Children's Commissioner for England (2019). *Childhood vulnerability in numbers*. Available at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childhood-vulnerability-in-england-2019/>

¹³ Royal College of Psychiatrists (2017). 'Domestic violence and abuse – the impact on children and adolescents.'

Available at: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/information-for-parents-and-carers/domestic-violence-and-abuse-effects-on-children>; UNICEF (2006). *Behind Closed Doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics (2017). 'People who were abused as children are more likely to be abused as an adult: Exploring the impact of what can sometimes be hidden crimes'. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/peoplewhowereabusedaschildrenaremorelikelytobeabusedasanadult/2017-09-27>

Barnardo's, (2020). *Not just collateral damage: the hidden impact of domestic abuse on children*. Available at:

https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/'Not_just_collateral_damage'_Barnardo's_Report_0.pdf

¹⁵ The Observer (Sun 12 Apr 2020). 'Revealed: surge in domestic violence during COVID-19'. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/12/domestic-violence-surges-seven-hundred-per-cent-uk-coronavirus>

¹⁶ The Guardian (Wed 15 Apr 2020). 'Domestic abuse killings "more than double" amid COVID-19 lockdown'.

Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/15/domestic-abuse-killings-more-than-double-amid-COVID-19-lockdown>

¹⁷ Data from analysis of contacts to NSPCC's Helpline about children experiencing domestic abuse

¹⁸ <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/keeping-children-in-safe-and-loving-homes/domestic-abuse-policy-report/>

¹⁹ CSA centre

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-multi-agency-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-the-family-environment/multi-agency-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-the-family-environment-joint-targeted-area-inspections-jtais>

²¹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/modernslaveryintheukappendixtable>

S

²² Children's Commissioner as quoted in <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/counting-lives-report>

²³ <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/counting-lives-report>

²⁴ https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/still_running_3_full_report_final.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/304-2016-17-ukmpu-data-report-v1/file#:~:text=Missing%20Persons%20Data%20Report%202016%2F2017%20The%20overall%20number,missing%20continues%20to%20rise%20This%20data%20comes%20from>

²⁶ http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2020-0364/Vicky_Ford_MP_to_Emma_Lewell-Buck_MP.pdf

²⁷ www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/facts-you-might-not-know-about-young-carers

²⁸ www.socialcareservices.co.uk/care-package

²⁹ Forthcoming NSPCC research suggests that children aged 11-17 who display traits of loneliness, extroversion and use social media frequently were more likely to have been sent, received or asked to send sexual content to an adult on large social networks and gaming platforms

³⁰ Europol (2020) *Catching the virus: cybercrime, disinformation and the COVID-19 pandemic*. Lyon: Europol

³¹ CNN (2020) *The pandemic is causing an exponential rise in the online exploitation of children, experts say*. Published May 25th

³² Figures provided by Internet Watch Foundation

³³ The Remote Access Family Court, Mr Justice Macdonald, Version 4 – 16 April 2020 - <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Remote-Access-Family-Court-Version-4-Final-16.04.20.pdf>

³⁴ See details of the consultation at: <https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/news/rapid-consultation-remote-hearings>. The findings from the consultation were published on 6th May 2020 together with a new President's View from the Chambers which confirms that whether there is a need for any further national 'guidance' on remote hearings in the Family Court at this time is under consideration. Available at: <https://www.judiciary.uk/announcements/president-of-the-family-division-welcomes-nuffield-report-into-effectiveness-of-remote-hearings-during-COVID-19/>

³⁵ See <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2020/mar/lqscs-suspends-complaints-enquiries-of-councils-and-care-providers>

³⁶ https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/childrens-and-young-peoples-services-funding-and-spending-report-2018-19_1.pdf

