



e-Newsletter No 20
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Summer is here with a very school themed month - with interim reports from our three social workers in schools projects, as well as our summary of the existing evidence base on educational interventions for looked after children already published last week. Our work re-analysing the Education Endowment Foundation's trials has begun in earnest, and we have a new project being announced soon - so watch this space. Later in the month, we'll also be publishing our interim reports from our devolved budgets project.

As the temperature has risen over the last few weeks, we've continued to get out and about - visiting 11 local authorities in July, chatting to managers and social workers about our research, helping shape what we do next, and getting projects like our [PINE programme](#) underway.

Stakeholder Advisory Group

Stakeholders have been involved in the development of What Works for Children's Social Care from the outset and earlier this year we decided to reshape our consultative panels into one Stakeholder Advisory Group. The purpose of this was to facilitate different stakeholder groups meeting and talking with each other about our work and future priorities. We held an open application process and received nearly 50 applications. Last week our new Stakeholder Advisory Group met together for the first time and started to think about how they will function and communicate with the rest of the organisation. We are delighted to be working with this group of people and look forward to many challenging and thought-provoking conversations throughout the year. Find out more about [our SAG members here](#).

Polling

Social worker polling is now underway - those who have signed up have already received two online polls aimed at capturing social workers' attitude and behaviour on important issues. The latest poll fit with our recent publication about



shared decision-making and asked whether social workers feel that parents' voices are heard during child protection conferences. Over two-thirds (69%) of social workers thought this was 'always' or 'very often' the case, which is a really encouraging result.

If you are a registered social worker and you would like to take part in online polling you can do so using the links below. And please enjoy a free gift from us as a thank you for taking part.

[Sign up as an individual and receive a £5 M&S voucher.](#)

[Sign up as a team of 6 people and receive a food hamper.](#)

Health Check

If you work in a local authority you may have some experience of the social work health check. It was introduced as part of the Local Government Association's 'Standards for Employers of Social Workers' in 2014 and is an annual survey of social workers that aims to capture the practice conditions and working environment of the workforce. Health checks are now commonplace in local authorities but the way they are conducted and the impact of their findings varies greatly. We are therefore working with the LGA to develop a new health check that includes standardised questions, enabling users to see a national picture of workforce conditions. We are also creating tools to improve the way survey results are analysed and displayed, thereby improving the impact they have on decision-making.

We are currently working with Principal Social Workers to co-produce the new survey - if you are a PSW and would like to get involved please contact us at wwccsc@nesta.org.uk

[New review live on our Evidence Store](#)

Supporting the education of looked after children: a range of interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes for children and young people in care. The information in this summary refers to one intervention for which there is sufficient information; Teach Your Children Well. Teach Your Children Well had some positive effects on children's academic skills. This intervention has not yet been delivered in the UK.



Take part: Understanding how to help social workers make better decisions

Some of the most important parts of a social worker's role are assessing the likelihood of future significant harm, and making judgements about whether a family might benefit from specific services, or what might happen if a case is closed. All of which involve making some sort of forecast about the future. These decisions have an enormous impact on people's lives and are taken against a complex backdrop with many interlinked factors. Our latest project wants to understand how social workers can be supported to make the best decisions possible, so they feel confident they are achieving the best outcomes for children and families. In order to do this we need the help of 600 social workers across the UK, who are willing to make forecasts based on the anonymised summaries of real cases, which we can then compare with the actual outcomes. This will help us understand if short exercises can help make forecasts more accurate.

As a thank you, we will donate money to two charities for every survey that's completed. The totals will be shared equally between [Trevi House](#) and [Become](#), which will each receive up to £2,100 if we achieve our target of 600 surveys completed. If you are a social worker, and would like to take part, [you can do so by following this link](#). The exercise will take approximately 30 minutes and is best completed on a laptop, PC or tablet.