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| **Minding the Gap - News Brief: No. 150** |
| **Unhealthy Finances: How to Support the Economy Today and Repair the Public Finances Tomorrow**  This report provides analysis of the dual challenges faced by the government: ensuring that there is sufficient fiscal support through the crisis and recovery, and setting fiscal policy on a sustainable long-term path. Some argue it is unsustainable to provide the massive government support during the crisis, while others see little constraint on government borrowing in an era of low interest rates. Neither position is helpful for long-term economic outcomes.  In the face of low interest rates, fiscal policy has to be the main tool for supporting the economy now and in the future, meaning bigger fiscal stimulus and in place for longer. But low interest rates do not mean that fiscal policy can be looser forever. A new approach to fiscal policy is needed; one which explicitly accounts for the need for government spending during future recessions and supports additional public sector investment. In practical terms, this means targeting stable public sector net worth across future economic cycles, requiring £40 billion of consolidation, starting sometime after 2023-24.  This report also lays out a practical pathway to achieve this. There are real opportunities to improve the tax system post-crisis: moving towards equal treatment of earnings and investment incomes, facilitating the transition to ‘net zero’ carbon emissions, and recognising changes in the distribution of household wealth in Britain over the past few decades. But, ultimately, the government is likely to need to be more radical – we suggest the introduction of a Health and Social Care Levy to set the government finances on the right track and properly fund social care.  [Report](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/11/Unhealthy-finances.pdf) |
| **COVID-19 has Revealed our Governance System Lacks Capacity, But will we do Anything About it?**  This blog discusses COVID-19 and it has revealed that our governance system is not just prone to the occasional disaster; it is fundamentally flawed. It is because our state lacks capacity to mobilize resources to meet our needs. To put it bluntly, we have a governance system that: (1) undermines effective communication between state and citizens; (2) lacks the capacity to coordinate and bring together sectors and actors to meet common goals; and (3) consistently fails to share power effectively and distribute resources fairly.  [Blog](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/covid19-governance-inquiry/) |
| **The Independent SAGE Report 21: Covid-19 and Health Inequality**  The most deprived neighbourhoods in England have a COVID-19 mortality rate more than twice that of the most affluent. Likewise, people in the lowest paid occupations are twice as likely as those in higher occupational groups (such as professionals and business leaders) to die from COVID-19. This report examines these inequalities in COVID-19 in more detail – contextualising them within the wider issue of health  Inequalities.  The report provides an overview of socio-economic health inequalities in the UK. It then summarises epidemiological evidence of socio-economic inequalities in relation to COVID-19 (both in the UK and internationally) and examines the pathways linking COVID-19 and inequality. In part three, it examines inequalities and the impact of the emergency policy response to COVID-19, including the lockdown, the emerging parallel pandemic of restricting non-COVID NHS services, mental health impacts, rising homelessness and school closures. Part four examines the emerging evidence of an unequal COVID-19 economic crisis and the impact that it could have on future health inequalities. The report concludes by outlining some key recommendations whereby local government and devolved authorities, the NHS and  national government can act to reduce these inequalities.  [Report](https://www.independentsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Inequalities-_i_SAGE_FINAL-draft_corrected.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11973289_NEWSL_HWB_2020-11-23&dm_i=21A8,74MND,FLWQCU,SUAI8,1) |
| **Covid-19 and the Northern Powerhouse: Tackling Inequalities for UK Health and Productivity**  This report shines a spotlight on the disproportionate e­ffect of COVID-19 and the underlying inequality that helps to fuel this high impact on the more vulnerable in society. This should be no surprise to the reader  But this has been recognised for many years and we must work together to influence change. Life expectancy in the UK had stopped improving and between 2011 and 2017, improvement was slower in the  UK than in the majority of OECD countries. This report shows, the unequal health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on the Northern Powerhouse. As it develops its post-COVID-19 ‘levelling up’ industrial strategy, central government should pay particular attention to the importance of supporting the physical and mental health and development of the Northern Powerhouse as a route to increased prosperity.  [Report](https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/NP-COVID-REPORT-101120-.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11973289_NEWSL_HWB_2020-11-23&dm_i=21A8,74MND,FLWQCU,SU5JS,1) |
| **Learning to Level Up: The Role of Skills in Tackling Job Insecurity through Brexit and Covid-19**  Covid-19 has resulted in job losses, reduced hours and heightened insecurity for many workers across the labour market. Against this backdrop and the imminent end to freedom of movement as the UK leaves the EU, the types of jobs available to workers, and the skills in demand by employers, are shifting. Recognising how crucial opportunities for training to develop skills will be in this context, Government recently set out plans to introduce a Lifetime Skills Guarantee. This will provide free intermediate and higher level training courses to individuals in England who do not hold a qualification at or above level 3 (A-Level equivalent).  While this will broaden access to training for many workers, significant barriers to take up remain. This report presents new analysis on barriers to engaging in training among people at the middle of their working lives (between the ages of 25-49). Too often, workers who would benefit most from opportunities to develop new skills face the greatest barriers to taking part in training. For some, balancing work, caring responsibilities and financial commitments proves impossible. For others, a perception that training won’t lead to opportunities for progression can be off-putting.  This report provides insight into the nature of skills gaps in the UK labour market, the barriers workers are faced with in accessing skills and training programmes, and the ways in which policy and practice can be improved to maximise the impact that initiatives such as the Lifetime Skills Guarantee can have in the future.  [Report](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/lums/work-foundation/SkillsReport.pdf) |
| **Review of Interventions to Improve Outdoor Air Quality and Public Health**  This paper reviews the evidence for practical interventions to reduce harm from outdoor air pollution, stratified by their health and economic impact. The focus of the review was on those actions available to local authorities and, where appropriate, the national actions needed to support them. The paper is accompanied by a guide to help local authorities to use the evidence to choose or plan interventions to tackle air pollution.  [Paper](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/937341/Principal_interventions_for_local_authorities-air_quality_public_health.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11989794_NEWSL_HMP%202020-11-24&dm_i=21A8,74ZDU,FLWQCU,SWGDT,1) |
| **Mental Health for All?**  This final report of the Commission finds that mental health inequalities mirror wider economic and social inequalities. Wealth and power inequalities put at risk the mental health of people experiencing poverty, racial injustice and discrimination. This creates sharp social divisions, meaning that many groups of people face two or three times the risk of mental ill health. Yet the same groups of people find it harder to get help for their mental health, and in some cases also get poorer outcomes when they do. This report highlights, however, that effective action is possible. It sets out what a system designed for equality would look like, and how communities, local organisations, public services and national government can work together to generate change at scale.  [Report](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/publication/download/CentreforMH_Commission_FinalReport.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11970553_NEWSL_HMP%202020-11-17&dm_i=21A8,74KJD,FLWQCU,SUK6G,1) |
| **How has Covid-19 and the Associated Lockdown Measures Affected Mental Health and Wellbeing in the UK?**  Even before the pandemic hit, scaling up the treatment of mental health illnesses was highlighted as a powerful and cost-effective way to improve wellbeing in the UK. A recovery plan could usefully include strategies to support and restore access to mental health services and invest in activities that support people’s mental health, This briefing provides insights into how mental health conditions have changed and which risk factors need to be recognised when supporting people’s mental health.  [Briefing](https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Covid-Mental-health-briefing-Nov-2020-.pdf) |
| **The Future of Integrated care in England**  With the government expected to introduce new primary legislation affecting the NHS over the coming year, NHS leaders have set out the factors they believe should be central to a new framework for integrated care systems in this report which summarises feedback from a six-month engagement process. The report argues that joint working across health and care should be embedded in law and encouraged through a new statutory duty for all providers, commissioners and other partners in local systems.  [Report](https://www.nhsconfed.org/-/media/Confederation/Files/Publications/Documents/The-future-of-integrated-care-in_England.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11989794_NEWSL_HMP%202020-11-24&dm_i=21A8,74ZDU,FLWQCU,SVUPA,1) |
| **Kinship in the City: Urban Loneliness and the Built Environment**  This report explores the impact of urban loneliness and ideas for reshaping the built environment to improve social cohesion. Produced as part of the Future Spaces Foundation’s Vital Cities programme, it builds on an existing body of research into the building blocks of dynamic, socially sustainable cities where individuals and communities thrive. The report also suggests that it is important to consider the environmental and situational factors that have caused people to feel lonely in cities around the world, particularly those involving ineffective planning and design – the isolated neighbourhoods and overcrowded apartment blocks, the  unwelcoming squares and unsafe parks  [Report](https://www.futurespacesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/191023_FSF-Kinship-in-the-City_Book-file_GT_V01.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11934072_NEWSL_HWB_2020-11-09&dm_i=21A8,73SE0,FLWQCU,SR58E,1) |
| **Working Together for a Healthier Post-COVID Future**  This report is the initial output of the Wider Determinants of Healthy Life Expectancy Programme, one of the priority initiatives of the Healthier Futures Academy that has been established in the Black Country and West Birmingham to provide population health management, service redesign and workforce transformation capacity across the Healthier Futures Partnership.  [Report](https://www.strategyunitwm.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/061020%20Working%20Together%20for%20a%20Healthier%20Post-COVID%20Future%20-%20V1.1.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11934072_NEWSL_HWB_2020-11-09&dm_i=21A8,73SE0,FLWQCU,SQ0N7,1) |
| **Long Term Care Centres: Making Space for Ageing**  By 2030, there will be a 60 per cent increase in the number of individuals with caring responsibilities in the UK. This shift in the kind of work that we will be doing will require not just new funding arrangements but also robust infrastructure and working conditions. This paper proposes a network of long-term care centres that can form a key part of the new ‘caring economy’ that delivers for those who need care and those providing it.  [Paper](https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/spending-review-2020?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11989794_NEWSL_HMP%202020-11-24&dm_i=21A8,74ZDU,FLWQCU,SWMR9,1) |
| **The State of Ageing in 2020**  This report provides a snapshot of how people are ageing in the UK through the analysis of nationally available data. It explores the state of our health, our finances and our communities when Covid-19 hit and the impact it has had so far. It finds that the pervasiveness of poor health, unsafe and low-quality housing, and a lack of social connections – particularly among the poorest in our society – has exacerbated the impact of the pandemic on those who already faced the most challenging prospects in later life. It argues that if the current trajectory is allowed to continue, the gap between those who are able to enjoy later life and those who struggle through it will be even wider for future generations.  [Report](https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/The-State-of-Ageing-2020.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11973289_NEWSL_HWB_2020-11-23&dm_i=21A8,74MND,FLWQCU,SU4DY,1) |
| **Covid-19 and Disruptions to the Health and Social Care of Older People in England**  This briefing looks at the changes to the delivery of routine health care in England due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To prioritise access to hospital beds, staff and ventilators for Covid-19 patients, and to minimise the risk of infection for other patients, much routine health care was postponed or replaced with online or phone consultations. In addition, many would-be patients declined to seek care in the first place. This briefing aims to quantify these disruptions to care among older people in England in the early stages of the pandemic, and to examine who was most affected.  [Briefing](https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN309-COVID-19-and-disruptions-to-the-health-and-social-care-of-older-people-in-England-1.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11952921_NEWSL_HMP%202020-11-10&dm_i=21A8,746XL,FLWQCU,SSFNG,1) |
| **Coronavirus: Inside Test-and-Trace - How the 'world beater' Went Wrong**  This article examines England's NHS Test and Trace and reviews the how well the system has works. It also highlights some of the pitfalls of the introduction of private companies.  [Article](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55008133) |
| **Investigation into Government Procurement During the Covid-19 Pandemic**  This report finds a lack of transparency and adequate documentation of some key decisions (such as why particular suppliers were chosen or how the government identified and managed potential conflicts of interest) in the awarding of some contracts while the government was procuring large volumes of goods and services at high speed to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.  [Report](https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Investigation-into-government-procurement-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11980211_NEWSL_HMP%202020-11-20&dm_i=21A8,74RZN,FLWQCU,SVJGZ,1) |
| **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) |
| **Poor Areas of England Face 'Permanent' Lockdown**  This article suggests that some of England’s poorest areas face being trapped in coronavirus restrictions “permanently” unless the government tackles deep-rooted inequalities that are driving high transmission. The analysis has shown that the worst hit areas are often more deprived, had a high proportion of frontline workers and multi-occupancy housing, and a relatively larger Black and minority ethnic population.  [Article](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/18/poor-areas-of-england-face-permanent-lockdown-says-blackburn-public-health-chief?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other) |
| **COVID-19 in the North: Health and Wealth in the Pandemic**  **Venue: Online**  **Date: 15 December 2020**  **Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm**  This one-hour seminar will explore the impacts of COVID-19 on health and wealth in the Northern Powerhouse region, delivered in partnership with the Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSA).  In Mid-November 2020, a report published by the Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSA) revealed that the North of England was hit harder than the rest of the country during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating already existing health and economic inequalities between the North and the rest of the country  This session will allow you to hear from contributors to that report, including from NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (North East and North Cumbria, Greater Manchester, North West Coast, Yorkshire and Humber) and the NHSA.  Chaired by Professor Clare Bambra, Professor of Public Health, Newcastle University. Clare is also Inequalities Lead for the NIHR ARC North East and Cumbria, as well as for the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) and Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health. She is also Director of the Fuse-led Equal England Network, part of the NIHR SPHR.  With presentations from:  Dr Luke Munford, Health Economist at the University of Manchester and a member of the NIHR ARC Greater Manchester.  Dr Sophie Whickham, Wellcome Trust Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool and member of the NIHR ARC North West Coast.  Followed by a panel Q&A session featuring the above report co-authors, alongside:  Dr Seamus O'Neill, CEO of the NHSA  Dr Heather Brown, Health Economist at Newcastle University and co-lead of the Fuse Health Inequalities Programme.  Professor Kate Pickett, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of York and a member of the NIHR ARC Yorkshire and Humber.  This is the second in a series of six online seminars around Inequalities and Prevention and Early Intervention and Behaviour Change.  The series is delivered by the NIHR ARC North East and North Cumbria, in partnership with Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, the NIHR School for Public Health Research, and Equal England.  For more information and to register [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/covid-19-in-the-north-health-and-wealth-in-the-pandemic-tickets-128813624017) |
| **Justice Matters in the North**  **Venue: Online**  **Date: 1 December 2020**  **Time: 6:00pm – 7:15pm**    Brenda Hale, **Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE** (former President of the UK Supreme Court) and **Professor Philip Alston** (former UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and Extreme Poverty) will both be speaking. We will also have reflections from legal practitioners including Cris McCurley (Ben Hoare Bell), Michael Fawole (NE Law Centre) and Professor Luke Clements (University of Leeds) and others.    For more information and to register [Click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-online-conversation-justice-matters-in-the-north-tickets-127907293157) |
| **Webinar: Build back fairer: Inequalities and COVID-19 in England: A jointly hosted event by the Health Foundation and the UCL Institute for Health Equity**  **Venue: Online**  **Date: 15 December 2020**  **Time: 9:00 – 10:30**  **Build Back Fairer: the COVID-19 Marmot Review:** Commissioned by the Health Foundation, is being launched in December 2020 and investigates how the pandemic has affected health inequalities in England. The pandemic has amplified socioeconomic inequalities leading to a greater risk of mortality for BAME communities and more deprived areas and regions. Meanwhile new inequalities have emerged in relation to people’s occupation and housing conditions. Unless urgent mitigating action is taken to build back fairer, the impacts of pandemic containment measures will significantly widen inequalities in the early years, in education, employment, income, health and between communities.  **The pandemic’s impact on socioeconomic and health inequalities**  Professor Sir Michael Marmot will present the findings followed by a panel discussion in which speakers will delve into its key themes including education, employment, income and poverty, ethnicity, regional differences in England and building back fairer.  Speaking in this section:    • Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director, Institute of Health Equity  • Chair: Richard Horton, Editor, The Lancet  • Andy Burnham (TBC), Mayor of Greater Manchester  • Angela Donkin, Chief Social Scientist, National Foundation for Educational Research  • Kevin Fenton, London Regional Director, Public Health England  **The long-term implications for socioeconomic and health inequalities**  This section will look at the report through the lens of the COVID-19 impact inquiry. It will look ahead to what needs to be done in the future and how to address the long-term challenges coming out of the pandemic. Members of the inquiry’s expert advisory panel will consider some of the wider challenges for communities and the economy, and how they influence health.  Speaking in this section:    • Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director, Institute of Health Equity  • Chair: Dame Clare Moriarty, Chair of the COVID-19 impact inquiry advisory panel  • James Banks, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Fiscal Studies  • Mehrunisha Suleman (TBC), Senior Research Fellow, the Health Foundation  For more information and to register [click here](https://thehealthfoundation.zoom.us/webinar/register/2216061336310/WN_h0NPQe3BSW6TFYZl0JvIvg?utm_source=Institute+of+Health+Equity+Updates&utm_campaign=44190c6d66-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_05_23_06_56_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_87647e5806-44190c6d66-407546941) |
| **Prevention in Mental Health: From Theory to Practice**  **Venue:** Online  **Date: 7th – 10th December 2020**  Mental ill health will always be a part of many people’s lives but, increasingly, many of the causes of mental ill health can be successfully addressed. Preventive approaches can help to reduce levels of mental ill health in the population and can also mean that more people living with mental health problems are able to stay well and avoid relapse or crisis.  The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that addressing growing levels of mental ill health is one of the defining public health challenges of our time. Preventive approaches are fundamental to achieving this, but there often needs to be greater clarity about what these mean in practice and how they can be implemented within the NHS, local communities, schools and families.  From health promotion to suicide prevention, and from the role of general practitioners to that of local authorities, this conference will bring together experts from all parts of the health and care sector to discuss what prevention means with regard to mental health and how preventive approaches can be applied in practice. Join us to hear from a range of speakers, including academic and policy experts, national body leaders, frontline staff, experts by experience and young people.  This event is run in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation. You can watch the sessions live or catch up on demand until Sunday 20 December.  How does the virtual conference format work?  Full programme coming soon.  Early bird rates available until Sunday 8 November. Find out more and register [here](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/prevention-mental-health?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11858934_MKEVT_J1344_Prevention%20in%20mental%20health_Soft_launch&utm_content=Find%20out%20more%20and%20register&dm_i=21A8,726EU,FLWQCU,SI5Q3,1) |
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