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| **Minding the Gap - News Brief: No. 157** |
| **The Future of Parkrun is at Stake**Ever since the first lockdown began I have been worried about whether or not parkrun would survive. Parkrun is often referred to as ‘one of the greatest public health initiatives in the history of the United Kingdom’ in the corridors of Public Health and elsewhere. But now isn’t the time for platitudes or empty gestures. We must all do everything we can to ensure that parkrun is here to be enjoyed for generations to come. I am sure that a large majority of parkrun locations will be able to return on Saturday 5 June.Whilst it is essential that the vast majority of 5k events in England return at the same time because, if only some of them did, those events that did open would become overwhelmed with participants. This would, of course, create an unsafe environment which we must do everything we can to avoid. Therefore, if you can influence and encourage your local landowner (often local authorities) to confirm permission quickly, please do so. If you’d like to volunteer, let your local event know. If there is anything at all that you think that you can do to help your local team return, please get in touch with them. |
| **What are Health Inequalities?**Health inequalities are ultimately about differences in the status of people’s health. But the term is also commonly used to refer to differences in the care that people receive and the opportunities that they have to lead healthy lives, both of which can contribute to their health status. Differences in health status and the things that determine it can be experienced by people grouped by a range of factors. In England, health inequalities are often analysed and addressed by policy relating to socio-economic factors and income, geographical factors, specific characteristics including those protected in law, such as sex, ethnicity or disability and socially excluded groups, for example, people experiencing homelessness.People experience different combinations of these factors, which has implications for the health inequalities that they are likely to experience. There are also interactions between the factors. For example, groups with particular protected characteristics can experience health inequalities over and above the general and pervasive relationship between socio-economic status and health. This paper provides an overview of how health inequalities are experienced in England.[Paper](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities) |
| **Buy Now...Pain Later?**Millions of people in the UK have used a buy now pay later (BNPL) product in the last year. BNPL is a financial product that lets people split or delay payments to make them more manageable in the short-term. Whilst this is helpful for some, as a credit product it is inherently risky. There is often a lack of information at the checkout to help people understand that BNPL is a credit product and what the consequences will be if they’re not able to make repayments. Combined with inconsistent affordability checks, this encourages people to spend more than they can afford and leads too many people into debt as a consequence.This report asks that regulation should be introduced and should focus on the way in which product are designed, better information and understanding of the products and that affordability checks are more thorough and that individuals in financial difficulty are treated fairly and consistently.[Report](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Debt%20and%20Money%20Publications/BNPL%20report%20%28FINAL%29.pdf) |
| **Community**This podcast discusses the impact of the pandemic on communities and ask how we can build resilience for the future. This podcast explores cases of communities rallying in new ways, building social networks, but also stories of struggle and hardship exacerbated by the crisis. The podcast asks the question, what has the past year taught us about our communities in the UK and beyond, and how can we use those lessons to be more socially cohesive and better prepared for future emergencies?The podcast also discusses issues including the digital divide, levels of poverty and deprivation exposed by the pandemic and ideas on how to improve people's neighbourhood environment.Panel:Dame Louise Casey, crossbench peer, government adviser on housing and social welfareRachel Wolf, partner at Public First, co-author of Conservative 2019 general election manifestoPastor John Funnell, Noddfa Church, Abersychan, South WalesToby Lloyd, chair of the 'No Place Left Behind Commission'[Podcast](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000tltt) |
| **What is Happening to Life Expectancy in England?**There have been two turning points in trends in life expectancy in England in the past decade. From 2011 increases in life expectancy slowed after decades of steady improvement, prompting much debate about the causes. Then in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic was a more significant turning point, causing a sharp fall in life expectancy the magnitude of which has not been seen since World War II.This article examines trends in life expectancy at birth up to 2020 and the impact of Covid-19 in 2020, gender differences, geographical inequalities, causes of the changing trends since 2011, and how the UK’s life expectancy compares with other countries.[Article](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/whats-happening-life-expectancy-england?dm_i=21A8%2C7BUZA%2CFLWQCU%2CTQHFV%2C1&utm_campaign=12310678_NEWSL_The%20Weekly%20Update%202021-04-16&utm_content=life_expectancy_button&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29) |
| **Rise in Temporary Work: Balancing Flexibility and Insecurity**Despite an overall decline in the number of payroll employees over the past year, some forms of insecure work are expanding. Despite temporary work being able to provide flexibility to businesses, as well as workers, recent figures indicate that the number of workers who are in involuntary temporary work, meaning they were unable to find permanent work, has gone up by 23% over the past year. This Blog argues that temporary jobs are more likely to have ‘bad job’ characteristics, meaning temporary jobs are more likely to be lower paid, and provide workers with less access to training and development, career progression, and employer sick pay. When individuals work a series of temporary jobs over a prolonged period of time, there are associated wage penalties and a lower likelihood of being able to obtain permanent work.[Blog](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/work-foundation/news/blog/rise-in-temporary-work-balancing-flexibility-and-insecurity) |
| **The Lives we want to Lead: Where Next for the Debate About Care and Support Reform?**The severity of the pandemic and the change in our daily lives has been staggering. Yet, while it may feel like everything has changed, some things have not. The issues facing social care – particularly the scale of funding pressures are just as pressing, with many having been exacerbated by the pandemic. This briefing suggests that we need to move away from thinking about social care in transactional terms and focus more on its value in supporting people’s relationships and our local communities.Social care and support has shown itself to be an essential part of how we are able to live the life the way we want to and it is impossible to think that what we have experienced iver the past year may pass without affecting lasting and meaningful changes to social care. Committing to social care reform is about committing to a better future for all of us.[Briefing](https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/lives-we-want-lead-where-next-debate-about-care-and-support-reform?dm_i=21A8%2C7B2Z5%2CFLWQCU%2CTNEGD%2C1&utm_campaign=12274385_NEWSL_HMP%202021-04-02&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29) |
| **Seeking an Anchor in an Unstable World: Experiences of Low-Income Families Over Time**This report draws on the experiences of 14 low-income families over a 5-year period ending on the eve of the pandemic. In most of the families in the study, either a parent, child or both had ongoing physical and/or mental health issues. This had implications over time for families' work opportunities, income and plans. The report also examines other issues such as housing, employment, benefits, family composition, and support from formal and informal sources.[Report](https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/57831/download?token=Z43qxtOP&filetype=full-report) |
| **Building Community Wealth with the Infrastructure of Everyday Life**The UK, and particularly England, has longstanding and persistent geographical disparities in economic and social conditions and outcomes. The disadvantage that stems from this inequality is both complex and varied. Having placed this regional inequality at the heart of its programme, the government must empower local areas and communities to maximise their existing skills, talents and capabilities. This publication advocates for community wealth building as a powerful tool to democratise local economies provides suggestions for how it can be used within applications to the government’s Levelling Up Fund to develop an approach where wealth is brought closer to our communities and our neighbourhoods.[Paper](https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Levelling-Up-Fund-Final-pdf.pdf) |
| **Fractured and Forgotten? The Social Care Provider Market in England**There is now a political, and growing public, consensus that the social care system is in urgent need of reform. Over the past 20 years, there have been frequent and ever-more urgent calls for reform, yet debate has quickly become politically toxic and progress has stalled. Although widely acknowledged to be fragile, there is limited understanding of the root causes of its instability and scant discussion of what is needed to make it more functional or, indeed, what the market is intended to deliver.This report warns that years of delay to social care reform and a fragmented market have left provider services unstable and without support for innovation. It argues that there needs to be a better understanding among policy-makers of how the market works and an acknowledgement that any reform to funding also needs to address the structural faults. Moreover, the report argues that comprehensive reform to the entire system is needed.[Report](https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/files/2021-04/nuffield-trust-social-care-provider-market-web1.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12313239_NEWSL_HMP%202021-04-20&dm_i=21A8,7BWYF,FLWQCU,TR13J,1) |
| **The Socioeconomic Determinants of Crime According to a Police Chief: “Tackle Poverty and Inequality to Reduce Crime”**This article argues that cutting poverty and inequality is the best way to reduce crime and calls for more money for deprived areas to thwart criminals’ attempts to recruit those left desperate by deprivation. The article also calls for substantial funding into the infrastructure of our inner cities and our more deprived areas. There is a massive aspiration gap. If your father hasn’t got a job, and your grandfather hasn’t got a job or if those jobs available are particularly poorly paid, temporary, insecure, does this make work attractive?[Article](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/apr/18/tackle-poverty-and-inequality-to-reduce-says-police-chief) |
| **A Connected Recovery: Findings of the APPG on Loneliness Inquiry**This inquiry makes the case for a ‘connected recovery’ from the Covid-19 pandemic. It explored problems and identified solutions within four crucial policy areas, including: translating national policy into local action through local authorities; community infrastructure (including housing, transport and public spaces); how to adequately fund the voluntary and community sector upon which social prescribing depends; and designing and implementing ways to test the implications of government policies on loneliness.[Report](https://kingsfundmail.org.uk/21A8-7AQM7-FLWQCU-4E2RT3-1/c.aspx) |
| **After Shocks: Financial Resilience before and during the Covid-19 Crisis**This report provides some of the first evidence on how the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on households has differed across countries. It studies the living standards-related factors that contribute to financial resilience (or the lack of it) both before and during Covid-19 in the UK, France and Germany.The report finds that pre-crisis vulnerabilities were large, especially in the UK and conclude that the impact of the crisis will last via its effects on savings and debt. Going from here, the task for policy maker’s task is to respond to the specific impacts of the crisis, without losing sight of the longer-term trends and problems that needed action long before the pandemic.[Report](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/04/After-shocks.pdf) |
| **How Cuts and Covid-19 have Bankrupted our Councils**Years of central government cutbacks combined with the fallout from Covid-19 have left councils across the country in crisis – with 25 on the brink of bankruptcy and many more unable to provide basic services.[Article](https://tribunemag.co.uk/2021/03/how-cuts-and-covid-have-bankrupted-our-councils?mc_cid=c6dca0d1e2&mc_eid=74576ac71e) |
| **End the Scandal of Poor-Quality Exempt Accommodation**This article calls to end the scandal of poor-quality Exempt Accommodation, so vulnerable people and families are housed in high-quality accommodation, with appropriate support in place. The article also calls to bring about legislative change to give Local Authorities and the Regulator of Social Housing greater powers of enforcement over rogue landlords, and strengthen the vetting process to prevent rogue landlords gaining licenses.[Article](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/petition-law-change-end-scandal-20423498) |
| **Swingeing Cuts on Cards as Councils in England Face Funding Crisis**This article suggests that residents may face years more swingeing cuts to local services, from social care to libraries, bin collections and bus routes, as at least 25 councils teeter on the brink of bankruptcy, the public spending watchdog has warned. According to the National Audit Office, the vast majority of English councils (94%) expect to cut spending next year to meet legal duties to balance their budgets. The “scarring” of council balance sheets since the coronavirus pandemic began has been so fierce that half of town halls do not expect their finances to recover until at least the middle of the decade.[Article](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/mar/10/swingeing-cuts-on-cards-as-councils-in-england-face-funding-crisis-watchdog-warns)[Report](https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Local-government-finance-in-the-pandemic.pdf) |
| **Frequency of Active Travel by Local Authority**At the same time as environmental issues relating to better opportunities of exercising outdoors with fewer traffic journeys and improving air quality, we are not seeing real improvements in the level of physical activity as we should. We all know that increasing physical activity and minimising the time spent sitting down helps to maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and depression. However, on average, relatively few people in England engage in regular walking and cycling. In 2018/19: Whilst 16% of adults cycled once per month, but only 3% cycled five times per week or more 80% of adults walked once per month, but only 44% walked three times per week. A total of 33% of adults walked five times per week or more.This chart shows the share of adults who walk and cycle, for any purpose, by frequency and at local authority level.[Chart](https://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub/transport/active-travel/frequency-of-active-travel-by-local-authority) |
| **Track and Trace: Identifying Corruption Risks in UK Public Procurement for the Covid-19 Pandemic**The COVID-19 pandemic has required a rapid public health response on a scale and speed unseen in modern times. Whilst those procuring goods and services have sought to expedite the emergency response, we observe a pattern of behaviour whereby critical safeguards for protecting the public purse have been thrown aside without adequate justification.This study which looks at procurement during the pandemic involved a painstaking review of nearly 1,000 contracts worth a total of £18 billion. It concludes that the way the UK government handled bids for supplying personal protective equipment (PPE) and other Covid-19 response contracts appears partisan and systemically biased in favour of those with political access.[Report](https://www.transparency.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/publications/Track%20and%20Trace%20-%20Transparency%20International%20UK.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12330073_NEWSL_HMP%202021-04-27&dm_i=21A8,7C9Y1,FLWQCU,TT2V9,1) |
| **The Deaton Review of Inequalities: A New Year’s Message**The Deaton Review was set up to look at the possibility that inequalities may prove a threat to our economic, social and political systems unless they are tackled effectively. The review argues that among other things we collectively lacked a coherent understanding of how key forms of inequality relate to each other: such as inequalities in health, income, wealth, educational opportunity and family life, and gaps between rich and poor, different parts of the country, different ethnic groups and different genders. Since then, the world has changed more than any of us could have imagined. And yet COVID-19 seems to have shone a light on many of the issues we raised pre-pandemic, more vividly than we ever could have.This report examines the impact of the pandemic on educational, economic, social and health inequalities in the UK. It outlines data and evidence on the groups that have been most heavily impacted by widening inequalities and Covid-19. The report suggests that the COVID crisis has exacerbated inequalities between the high- and low-paid and between graduates and non-graduates and that it has hit the self-employed and others in insecure and non-traditional forms of employment especially hard. Educational inequalities will almost certainly have been exacerbated by the crisis, the crisis has had very different impacts on different ethnic groups and whilst pensioners have on average reported becoming financially better off, the young have borne the brunt of job and income loss, mortality rates from COVID-19 were twice as high in the most deprived areas as in the least deprived.[Report](https://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IFS-Deaton-Review-New-Year-Message.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%28main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12061170_NEWSL_HMP%202021-01-05&dm_i=21A8,76IGI,FLWQCU,T4HCZ,1) |
| **Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review** This report has been produced by the UCL Institute of Health Equity and commissioned by the Health Foundation as part of its [COVID-19 impact inquiry](https://www.health.org.uk/what-we-do/a-healthier-uk-population/mobilising-action-for-healthy-lives/covid-19-impact-inquiry/call-for-evidence) to investigate how the pandemic has affected health inequalities in England.It was the principles of fairness and the need to do things differently that animated the concrete recommendations we set out in our February 10 Years On Review, just before the pandemic hit with such devastating intensity. Inequalities in mortality from COVID-19 and rising health inequalities as a result of social and economic impacts, have made such action even more important.The aim of this report is three-fold:* To examine inequalities in COVID-19 mortality. Focus is on inequalities in mortality among members of BAME groups and among certain occupations, alongside continued attention to the socioeconomic gradient in health – the more deprived the area, the worse COVID-19 mortality tends to be
* To show the effects that the pandemic, and the societal response to contain the pandemic, have had on social and economic inequalities, their effects on mental and physical health, and their likely effects on health inequalities in the future
* To make recommendations on what needs to be done

**The report highlights that:*** Inequalities in social and economic conditions before the pandemic contributed to the high and unequal death toll from COVID-19
* The nation’s health should be the highest priority for government as we rebuild from the pandemic
* The economy and health are strongly linked – managing the pandemic well allows the economy to flourish in the longer term, which is supportive of health
* Reducing health inequalities, including those exacerbated by the pandemic requires long-term policies with equity at the heart
* To build back fairer from the pandemic, multi-sector action from all levels of government is needed
* Investment in public health needs to be increased to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on health and health inequalities, and on the social determinants of health.

[Full Report](https://yhphnetwork.co.uk/media/72540/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-ihe-2020.pdf)[Executive Summary](https://yhphnetwork.co.uk/media/72541/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-executive-summary-ihe-2020.pdf)[Build Back Fairer Launch Webinar](https://youtu.be/vRyVNyIrBn0?t=133) |
| **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) |
| **Events****Child Exploitation and Risk Assessments: Working to Increase Safety in Exploitation (WISE)****Venue: Online****Date: Wednesday, 26 May, 2021****Time: 16.00 to 17.15****WISE is a national pilot with the principal focus on developing alternative approaches to understanding issues of safety when working with young people at risk of, or experiencing, child exploitation.** Listen Up is leading the co-ordination and research of this project which is a working partnership between Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub and wider-safeguarding partners. The initial evaluation of WISE is being supported by the What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care and findings are due to be published late spring 2021. This free seminar will focus on the findings of the WISE project and will explore the origins of child exploitation risk assessments and messages from research relating to child exploitation risk assessments. The seminar will also discuss the use and limitations of such tools and how they can include some young people and exclude others. Findings and lessons from WISE - including moving away from risk assessments and tools and moving towards a focus on safety and stability will be shared.For further details or to request your free seminar place please [**click here**](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/child-exploitation-and-risk-assessments-registration-152068636385) |
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