# Welcome to the ECU bulletin 7 January 2015

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Health and wellbeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Universal free school meals: take up by infant pupils</td>
<td>16. Address gaps in mental health care for new mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The childcare support gap 2014</td>
<td>18. Facts and figures on infant mortality and childbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>19. Newborn babies screened for more rare conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Childcare finder</td>
<td>20. New Change4Life campaign encourages families to cut down on sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Study of early education and development: views and experiences of childminders</td>
<td>21. Measuring child development at age 2 to 2.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Advice on the admission of summer born children: for local authorities, school admission authorities and parents</td>
<td>Safeguarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Using the pupil premium, service premium or early years pupil premium in admission arrangements</td>
<td>23. National case review repository: Case reviews published in 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Disability and special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Historical and contemporary evaluations of early childhood programmes</td>
<td>25. £31.7 million boost for SEND reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. 'Row, row, row your boat': singing, identity and belonging in a nursery</td>
<td>26. Special educational needs and disability pathfinder programme evaluation: summary of interim impact findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The development of humour and pretending from infancy to three years</td>
<td>27. Evaluation of local areas’ readiness for the implementation of the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>28. Changes to special educational needs and disability support - easy read guide for children and young people and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Troubled Families: progress information at September 2014 and families turned around at October 2014</td>
<td>Consultations and calls for evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Estimating the number of families eligible for the expanded Troubled Families programme</td>
<td>29. Revisions to working together to safeguard children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Revisions to working together to safeguard children</td>
<td>30. Prevent Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. SEND funding: longer-term changes: call for evidence</td>
<td>Conferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Policy**

1. **Universal free school meals: take up by infant pupils**
   These official figures by the Department for Education show that the policy of offering free school meals to all infants at school has had a high uptake in its first three months. In total, 1,640,530 children, equivalent to 85% of all infants, are eating a school meal at lunchtime.

2. **School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014: Government consultation response**
   This document provides a summary of responses received and the government’s response. The majority of the 865 responses (755) were concerned with the definition of “excluded early years provision”, which “does not actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; or promotes, as evidence-based, views and theories which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations”. Regarding British values, the response says that “it is right that children in early years settings should be taught about these values in an age-appropriate way. For children in the early years, this will be about learning right from wrong; learning to take turns and share; and in practitioners challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes”.

3. **The childcare support gap 2014**
   This research by the Family and Childcare Trust argues that around 335,000 families could miss out on financial help to pay for childcare and stay in work, because of the complexity of the new childcare support system. The government estimated that 50,000 such families may be affected, but the figures did not take into account the growing numbers of people who are self-employed and on zero hours contracts. The report makes a number of recommendations to the government, including: establish an independent review of childcare funding that simplifies the system for parents and ensures that those on the lowest incomes get the most help; enable families to switch between the different childcare support systems easily; a national campaign to inform parents about all types of help with their childcare costs; eligibility criteria for Universal Credit and the tax free voucher should be harmonised; eligibility age for disabled children should be raised to 18 for both the childcare element of Universal Credit and the tax-free childcare scheme.

**Practice**

4. **Childcare finder**
   A new childcare finder has been launched by the Family and Childcare Trust. You can search for Ofsted registered childcare across local authority boundaries through one simple postcode search. The search identifies registered nurseries, childminders, breakfast and after-school clubs, children’s centres and contact details for local authority Family Information Services. In addition, it provides information about choosing childcare and how to get help with childcare costs.
5. **Study of early education and development: views and experiences of childminders**

This qualitative study published by the Department for Education explored the experiences and contribution of childminders, and their views on current provision, including factors influencing capacity, fees and staffing; experiences of offering funded two and three-year-old provision; views of the infrastructure and support available for the sector, including the introduction of childminder agencies. The findings suggest that the number of childminders offering funded places might increase if the funding available for three and four-year-old places is increased, and clear information is disseminated on the accreditation process and eligibility criteria. In addition, the findings indicated that high quality provision could be supported by bursaries and flexible course formats for Level 3 qualifications; access to affordable on-going continuing professional development; and support for local quality assurance systems to embed good practice.

Childminders also felt they needed more detail on how childminder agencies will operate in their local area to make an informed decision about whether to join.

6. **Safer Internet Day 2015**

This year’s Safer Internet Day will take place on 10 February. In preparation, the UK Safer Internet Centre has produced resource packs for schools to use with 3-11-year-olds and 11-19-year-olds, as well as the parent and carer pack. These provide ideas to help schools, youth groups and other organisations get involved.

7. **Advice on the admission of summer born children: for local authorities, school admission authorities and parents**

Relating to maintained schools, this updated guidance by the Department for Education explains the framework within which admission authorities must operate when admitting summer-born children. It should be read in conjunction with the [School admissions code](#).

8. **Using the pupil premium, service premium or early years pupil premium in admission arrangements**

This Department for Education advice for school admission authorities and local authorities should be used when giving priority to children who are eligible for: the pupil premium, the service premium, the early years pupil premium. It should be read alongside the [School admissions code](#).

9. **Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2014**

This DfE publication includes data on the provision of education for children under five years of age, including funded places and overall numbers of children benefiting from early years education. It now also includes the number of two-year-olds taking up their entitlement to government-funded early years education.

10. **New organisation launched for early years trainers and consultants**

Two early years experts have launched a new organisation, The National Early Years Trainers and Consultants Organisation (NEYTCO), to give early years trainers and consultants a voice and to support networking, collaborating and commissioning. Paid members of NEYTCO will be listed in an [online member directory](#). Members will also be able to take advantage of a supportive forum for discussing relevant issues affecting the early years sector and a number of other benefits.
Research

11. **Historical and contemporary evaluations of early childhood programmes**
This article discusses and compares how early childhood education programmes have been evaluated for more than a century and how they are being evaluated now. It identifies some of the problems in evaluating such programmes and discusses how assessment can be used to improve programmes and practices in the field.

12. **‘Row, row, row your boat’: singing, identity and belonging in a nursery**
The concept of belonging is a key element of early childhood education curricula. This study examined the role of singing in the development of children's sense of belonging in a day nursery for children aged from six months to two years. The research design incorporated ethnography and portraiture, an approach to narrative inquiry. Observation and interpretation of singing focused on relationships between children and adults and between peers. Themes of identity and togetherness were identified in the analysis of data, and the findings support and reflect the children's relationships and sense of identity and belonging.

13. **The development of humour and pretending from infancy to three years**
Play is an important part of early learning and development, and humour and pretending are two forms of play which have the potential to encourage exploration and imagination. This occasional paper by Dr Elena Hoicka, Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield, looks at types of humour and pretending in infancy through three years; how social factors influence humour and pretending; humour and pretending in developmental disorders; and differences in humour and pretending.

Families

14. **Troubled Families: progress information at September 2014 and families turned around at October 2014**
These figures show progress information by the end of September 2014 and results claimed by local authorities for families turned around within the Troubled Families programme by the end of October 2014. The figures show that the programme has reached over 85,000 of the hardest to help households.

15. **Estimating the number of families eligible for the expanded Troubled Families programme**
This report by the Department for Communities and Local Government reports on the analysis behind the estimated 400,000 vulnerable families who will meet the criteria for the expanded troubled families programme. Criteria include: parents and children involved in crime and antisocial behaviour; children who have not been attending school regularly; parents and children with a range of health problems.

Health and Wellbeing

16. **Address gaps in mental health care for new mothers**
Women who have experience of, or are at risk of mental health problems, should get extra support before, during and after their pregnancy, says the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). To help address the gaps in care, NICE has updated guidelines on antenatal and postnatal mental health, which makes recommendations for the recognition, assessment, care and treatment of mental health problems in women during pregnancy and up to one year after childbirth, and in women who are planning a pregnancy.
Smoking during pregnancy can cause serious pregnancy-related health problems. These include complications during labour and an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth, low birth-weight and sudden unexpected death in infancy. This report by the Health and Social Care Information Centre presents the latest results and trends from the women's smoking status at time of delivery data collection in England. Findings show that 11.5% of pregnant women were known to be smokers at the time of delivery. This has fallen from 11.7% for the same quarter last year.

18. Facts and figures on infant mortality and childbirth
National Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network (ChiMat) has published a slide pack that presents key evidence and data on infant mortality and stillbirths at a national level. The slides detail the public health importance, trends and variations, explain the causes and underlying risk factors and highlight national policy. The slide pack is accompanied by a short briefing paper.

19. Newborn babies screened for more rare conditions
Public Health England’s NHS Newborn Blood Spot Screening Programme has been expanded to screen for four additional rare genetic disorders: homocystinuria (HCU), maple syrup urine disease (MSUD), glutaric aciduria type 1 (GA1) and isovaleric acidaemia (IVA). Testing for these conditions, leading to early detection and treatment, will benefit around 30 children in England each year.

20. New Change4Life campaign encourages families to cut down on sugar
Public Health England has launched a new Change4Life campaign to encourage parents to cut down the amount of sugar their children consume by making one or more simple swaps. The campaign launched following a new survey of Netmums users who were polled on their views on sugar. The results highlight that nearly half (47%) of mothers surveyed think their family has too much sugar in their diets and two-thirds of mothers (67%) are worried about the amount of sugar their children consume.

21. Measuring child development at age 2 to 2.5 years
The Department of Health is developing an outcome measure of child development at age two to two-and-a half years, the data for which will be published in the Public Health Outcomes Framework from 2015. This factsheet is aimed at health visiting providers and others involved in the roll-out of the assessment tool, and provides information about what the tool is and how it will be used.

22. Children, Families and Maternity e-bulletin
This bulletin published by the Department of Health provides guidance and advice on children, families and maternity. The December 2014 issue includes information on Integrated Review of Health and Education reviews at age 2.
23. National case review repository: Case reviews published in 2014
When a child dies from abuse or neglect, the local inter-agency group responsible for child protection conducts a case review to identify how local professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together to safeguard children. NSPCC worked with the Association of Independent Local Safeguarding Board Chairs to launch the national repository of published case reviews. The aim of the repository is to keep all the case reviews in one central location so that the learning in them is easier to access. A chronological list of the executive summaries or full overview reports of serious case reviews, significant case reviews or multi-agency child practice reviews published in 2014 is now available. To find other case reviews search the national repository.

Ofsted is required to publish datasets which are disclosed as a result of Freedom of Information requests. This website page contains early years datasets for 2013 and 2014, including:

- Children's centres as at 7 August 2013;
- Early years and childcare providers as at September 2013;
- Childcare providers who ceased being registered between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014;
- Childcare on domestic premises and childminders June 2014;
- All childcare provisions June 2014;
- Childcare non-domestic settings June 2014.

25. £31.7 million boost for SEND reforms
The Department for Education has announced that it will invest a further £31.7 million in 2015 to 2016 to help local authorities in England continue to meet the costs of implementing the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms.

26. Special educational needs and disability pathfinder programme evaluation: summary of interim impact findings
The report published by the Department for Education asked pathfinder families and a matched group of families for their views. The results provide a range of positive findings. In particular, there are clear signs of improvement around a good number of the process variables which are central to the reforms, such as being child/family centred and generating increased satisfaction with the overall process.

27. Evaluation of local areas’ readiness for the implementation of the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014
This document is advice to the Department for Education from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission on how well local authorities are prepared to carry out SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) reforms.
28. Changes to special educational needs and disability support - easy read guide for children and young people and parents
These two easy-to-read guides published by Mencap in partnership with the Department for Education help explain the changes to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system in England. The changes came into force in September 2014.

Consultations and Calls for Evidence

29. Revisions to working together to safeguard children
The government is consulting on revisions to the ‘Working together to safeguard children’ statutory guidance, which was published in 2013. The three main changes being consulted on are: the referral of allegations against those who work with children; notifiable incidents involving the care of a child; and the definition of serious harm for the purposes of serious case reviews.
Launch date: 6 January 2015
Closing date: 3 February 2015

30. Prevent Duty
This Home Office consultation seeks views on draft guidance on the Prevent duty, to be issued under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill. This duty will apply to a wide range of bodies supporting children and young people, including schools and registered childcare providers. The Prevent duty will reinforce the existing duties on keeping children safe by spreading understanding of the risks and current good practice across the country.
Launch date: 17 November 2014
Closing date: 30 January 2015

31. SEND funding: longer-term changes: call for evidence
The government is inviting interested individuals and organisations to help work out better ways to distribute special educational needs and disability (SEND) funding. The Department for Education has published a pack of data about children and young people with SEND, and is interested in any conclusions that may be drawn from this data. It is also interested in any local knowledge that could inform the national debate on how best to allocate this funding in the longer term.
Launch date: 13 November 2014
Closing date: 27 February 2015

Conferences

6-7 February 2015, London
Nursery World Show
26 February 2015, Sheffield

**Embedding Making it REAL: Practice sharing celebration event**

A unique event celebrating early literacy, including:

- Professor Cathy Nutbrown (University of Sheffield) on ‘The story of the REAL project: past, present and future’;
- A choice of workshops including involving parent volunteers and engaging bilingual families in Making it REAL. These provide an opportunity to hear directly from colleagues working on REAL projects;
- Dr Cathy Hamer on ‘Early identification in Making it REAL and the SEND code of practice’.

This is a celebration event for Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy), a Department for Education funded project. The Making it REAL project is an innovative approach to literacy based on partnerships with parents.

This free event is primarily for advisers, leaders and managers including childminding coordinators who can share learning with colleagues that they support. As places are limited, please send an expression of interest, stating your job role and place of work to awhitmore@ncb.org.uk

6-7 March 2015, London Olympia

**Childcare Expo 2015**

Free event aimed at those working in the early years, childcare and nursery sector. Features products and services from dedicated suppliers; seminars from industry experts; interactive workshops; and networking opportunities.

24-25 April 2015, Bournemouth

**Nursery2Primary show**

The Nursery2Primary will provide information from education experts, policy makers and working leaders and practitioners from leading schools and nurseries across the country, all bringing their latest ideas, inspiration and advice on managing and implementing change within educational establishments.

12-13 June 2015, Plymouth

**2015 Early Education Annual National Conference: Explore, Discover, Create**

---

ECU Bulletin is compiled and edited by NCB Information Centre. Any communications about the ECU Bulletin should be sent to: ecuadmin@ncb.org.uk

The Early Childhood Unit (ECU) works to sustain and improve the quality of services for young children through direct work with children’s services and settings, and through its national networks. This fortnightly bulletin provides up to date news and information for the Early Years sector, including research, policy and resources.