



Dear AD Safeguarding Colleagues

The SESLIP Newsletter 635 is available at <https://www.seslip.co.uk/newsletters/update-no-635-15th-november-2024/>

1. **Agenda Items for our next AD Safeguarding Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024** in person only 10.00-13.00 at Broadway House Tothill St, Westminster, London, SW1H 9NQ (<https://www.makevenues.co.uk/broadway-house-london> - Please send any suggestions for items you would like included on the agenda for our next meeting to [Anna.Gianfrancesco@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Gianfrancesco@brighton-hove.gov.uk) and [mark@markevansconsulting.co.uk](mailto:mark@markevansconsulting.co.uk) to date we have:

- Workforce (agency regulations, MoC and Agency Pay data)
- Regional Care Cooperative
- SE Fostering Hub
- SE Principal Social Worker Network
- National Alerts Process
- Forward plan dates for AD Safeguarding Network

2. **Number of children in care drops for first time in 16 years** - The number of children in the care of local authorities has declined for the first time in 16 years, government figures show. The Department for Education statistics reveal a marginal decline of 130 children in care on 31 March compared with the same time last year. On 31 March this year 83,630 children were in care. This marks the first year-on-year decline since 2008 when figures dropped to 60,920 from 59,960 in 2007. They then increased to 60,920 in 2009.

The number of children who ceased to be looked after between March 2023 and this year was 33,620 – a 6% increase on the previous year's figures. Just 2,980 of these children were adopted. According to DfE, the changes can "be explained by the large increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in recent years". The most recent figures show that the number of asylum-seeking children in the care of local authorities in 2024 was 7,380 – a 0.5% decline on figures seen in 2023.

Of all children in care on 31 March this year, 67% were in foster care placements, 10% were in children's homes, 6% were placed with parents and 2% were placed for adoption. A further 7% of children were placed in supported accommodation – a drop of 3% compared with last year's figures after Ofsted began regulating such settings.

The figures also reveal that just 55% of children were placed within the boundary of their own local authority. This proportion has declined year-on-year from 59% in 2020.

Responding to the figures, Councillor Roger Gough, children's services spokesperson for



the County Councils Network (CCN), said: "The numbers of children in local authority care has declined very slightly, but the fact remains that local authorities are looking after almost 15,000 more young people compared to a decade ago.

"If nothing changes, councils could be spending £12bn a year on children in care by 2030, with local authorities having to operate in a false economy of increasingly paying astronomical sums for placements and less on preventative services. But the biggest losers from the current system are young people themselves, with too many being placed in children's homes due to a lack of foster carers, and far too many being placed many miles from home at a time when they are experiencing the trauma of being removed from their family.

The Local Government Association says the new figures underline the urgent need for the government to use the forthcoming Spending Review to address the funding pressures in children's services.

To read the article <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/content/news/number-of-children-in-care-drops-for-first-time-in-16-years>

To view the statistics <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2024#releaseHeadlines-summary>

3. **10% drop in mainstream foster care household numbers since 2021** - Despite rising care population, the number of non-kinship foster households fell for third consecutive year in 2023-24, with sector charity citing lack of support, respect and remuneration for carers as causes. The number of mainstream foster care households in England has fallen by 10% over the past three years, despite a rising care population, official figures have shown. As of 31 March 2024, there were 33,745 approved non-kinship foster households, down by 1,260 (3.6%) on the year before and by 3,580 (9.6%) since 2021, revealed the Ofsted data.

Though the number of family and friends carer households grew for a second consecutive year in 2023-24, from 8,400 to 8,865, they are approved to care for specific children only. Also, the growth in their number has been far exceeded by the decline in the number of mainstream households, meaning total fostering capacity has fallen from 45,370 to 42,615 from 2021-24, a drop of 6.1% (2,755).

The fall in the number of mainstream fostering households translated into a drop in the number of approved fostering places in 2023-24, from 72,770 to 70,465. This figure has fallen year on year since 2020, when it stood at 78,830. Meanwhile, the number of filled approved mainstream places, which was stable from 2021-23, fell in 2023-24, from 44,580 to 42,870. This is despite the number of children in care in England having grown by 3,070, to 83,840, from 2021-23, a period during which the children's home sector has grown significantly.

Sector charity the Fostering Network said the declining number of carers was the result of a lack of remuneration, inadequate support from their council or fostering agency and



insufficient respect for their role. In response, the Department for Education (DfE) pointed to increased investment since 2023 in foster care recruitment through the rollout of regional hubs to support applicants through the process, which will be extended to the whole country in 2025-26.

To read the full article <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2024/11/13/number-of-mainstream-foster-care-households-down-by-10-over-past-three-years/>

To read the Ofsted report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2023-to-31-march-2024/fostering-in-england-1-april-2023-to-31-march-2024>

4. **LGA calls for council tax and health costs exemptions for care leavers** - Care leavers should not have to pay council tax or health costs such as for prescriptions, dental treatment and eye tests, according to the Local Government Association (LGA). The council representative body says the move would help prevent those leaving care from falling into financial hardship and support their transition to independent living.

The LGA says the move is needed as care leavers are "more financially vulnerable than their peers", with more than four in five care-experienced young people struggling to afford essentials, according to National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum figures cited by the local government organisation. Some councils already have council tax exemptions or reductions in place but the LGA wants to see a central government backed exemption England-wide to "ensure there is a consistent offer across the country".

To read the full news story: <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/content/news/lga-calls-for-council-tax-and-health-costs-exemptions-for-care-leavers>

5. **Black and Asian Leadership Initiative** (To date only Brighton, Bracknell and Slough are the only authorities that have used your 2024/25 places) - SESLIP have negotiated an agreement with the Staff College to buy places on their up and coming BALI programmes.

Information about the programme is set out below:

The BALI programme was designed to explore the obstacles and barriers facing aspiring Black\* leaders and give them the knowledge, skills and strategies to overcome them.

The course aims to:

- Provide strategies to help participants overcome barriers and enhance their skills to be able to thrive as Black global majority leaders;
- Renew self and group confidence, which is often depleted by every day racism;
- Enable participants to learn about and try out for themselves different leadership approaches and understand how these relate to their own values and principles;



- Ensure participants develop their own personal learning plan in order to help them progress in their careers.

BALI is a Black only space to ensure that:

- All participants are afforded a safe environment to consider how personal and professional experiences of covert, overt and institutional racism have and do impact upon them;
- Participants can explore issues from a Black perspective;
- They can develop a trusting, close and active network of Black colleagues.

Details about the up and coming programmes can be found at:

<https://thestaffcollege.uk/programmes/black-and-asian-leadership-initiative-bali/bali-application/>

Nominations - Each authority can access one place free (inclusive as part of SESLIP subscription) and additional places at cost. Nominations need to be endorsed by DCSs and sent to [Mark@markevansconsulting.co.uk](mailto:Mark@markevansconsulting.co.uk) The email should include the nominees name, job title, email address and which cohort of BALI they would like to access.

#### 6. **Dates and agenda setting** future AD Safeguarding Meetings

Our next meeting is:

- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 in person only 10.00-13.00 at Broadway House Tothill St, Westminster, London, SW1H 9NQ (<https://www.makevenues.co.uk/broadway-house-london>).

If you have any items for the agenda, please contact [Mark@markevansconsulting.co.uk](mailto:Mark@markevansconsulting.co.uk)

We have now identified the future dates (diary invites will follow shortly), they are:

- 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025

All in person only 10.00-13.00 at Broadway House Tothill St, Westminster, London, SW1H 9NQ (<https://www.makevenues.co.uk/broadway-house-london>)

Kind Regards

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