

Week ending 24 September 2010

Accidents

An analysis of government figures by the **AA** motoring organisation, suggest that children aged 11 to 12 are at the greatest risk of being injured or killed on the roads while walking to or from school. In 2008, the most recent year for which figures are available, there were 25 10-year-olds killed or badly injured while walking to or from school, compared with 68 11-year-olds, 96 12-year-olds and 55 13-year-olds. Andrew Howard, the **AA's** head of road safety, said "Parents need to think about how children will get to a new school safely...Not only is it crucial for parents to know their children's school routes, but also to review and discuss them with the children from time to time". (*Sunday Telegraph, 19 Sep 2010, p17*)

Adolescence

A survey of girls aged 11 to 18 found that one in five felt threatened by gangs and more than 40% knew someone who had been assaulted. The survey by **Plan UK** also found 50% of girls in London thought crime in their local area had gone up in the last few years and 10% of girls in the Midland cities knew someone who had been assaulted in their neighbourhood in the last six months. The study, *Because I am a Girl*, due to be published next week, is part of a wider international study. In the UK 500 girls living in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Bristol, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Coventry, Glasgow and Edinburgh, took part. Marie Staunton, Chief Executive of **Plan UK**, said "Poor street lighting, overcrowded housing, and harassment on public transport all contribute to the very real risks that girls face...These issues must be tackled". Nine out of ten girls thought that more police on the streets would make them feel safer and 91% wanted better street lighting. (*Guardian, 20 Sep 2010, p13*)

Adolescent Pregnancy

The **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence** is calling for antenatal clinics to be set up in schools so that midwives can help schoolgirls during their pregnancy. **NICE** said health checks in schools would help young mothers-to-be engage with NHS services as pregnant teenagers are often reluctant to attend clinics and feel excluded from mainstream antenatal care. The guidance also says efforts should be made to include the father in preparations for the birth if the mother agrees. Women under the age of 20 have a higher risk of having a stillbirth or of their child dying within six weeks of birth. Women from poor backgrounds are also five times more likely to die in childbirth. Dr Rhona Harris, who helped draw up the guidelines - *Pregnancy and Complex Social Factors* - said sessions in schools were a "common pattern of care" in the US. However critics of the guidance say moving antenatal classes into schools could "normalise" early motherhood. (*Express, 22 Sep 2010, p15; Guardian, 22 Sep 2010, p14; Independent, 22 Sep 2010, p6; Mirror, 22 Sep 2010, p14; Telegraph, 22 Sep 2010, p1; Times, 22 Sep 2010, p8; Mail, 24 Sep 2010, p28*)

Document Link:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13167/50822/50822.pdf>

Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour has a significant impact on the day-to-day lives of many people, particularly those living in more deprived areas, according to a study by **HM Inspectorate of Constabulary**. Sir Denis O'Connor, Chief Inspector of Constabulary,

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said officers had to be tougher on problems often not seen as "real police work". He calls for communities to "mobilise their defences" by re-establishing acceptable rules of behaviour to deal with youths who gather in town centres, aggressive drivers in residential streets and drunks. (*Express*, 23 Sep 2010, p2; *Guardian*, 23 Sep 2010, p19, p20; *Independent*, 23 Sep 2010, p19; *Mail*, 23 Sep 2010, p1, p6; *Mirror*, 23 Sep 2010, p4, p8; *Telegraph*, 23 Sep 2010, pp1-2; *Guardian*, 24 Sep 2010, p32; *Independent*, 24 Sep 2010, p2; *Mail*, 24 Sep 2010, pp10-11; *Mirror*, 24 Sep 2010, pp8-9, p31; *Telegraph*, 24 Sep 2010, p16)

Document Link:

<http://www.hmic.gov.uk/Programmes/antisocialbehaviour/Pages/home.aspx>

Charities

Guardian and *Observer* readers are being asked to help choose 10 innovative charity projects which work with teenagers and young people aged from 13 to 24 in the UK for the newspapers' 2010 Christmas appeal. The closing date for applications is 8 October. (*Guardian*, 20 Sep 2010, p9)

Website Link: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/christmas-charity-appeal-2010>

Child Rearing

Children's pocket money has been hit by the recession dropping to a seven-year low of below £6 a week. Average pocket money for children aged between eight and 15 is £5.89 this year, compared with £6.24 last year and £8.37 in 2005. The survey by **Halifax** also found that boys receive 38p more pocket money on average than girls, older children aged 12 to 15 receive around £7.02 a week, while younger children get £4.57. A separate survey, commissioned to mark the release of the film *Tooth fairy*, found that the average gift from the tooth fairy is now £1.63, although 10% of parents said they gave their children £5 or more for a milk tooth. (*Sun*, 18 Sep 2010, p34; *Telegraph*, 18 Sep 2010, p8; *Express*, 20 Sep 2010, p27; *Mail*, 20 Sep 2010, p24; *Telegraph*, 20 Sep 2010, p16; *Times*, 20 Sep 2010, p45)

A survey of more than 2,000 parents found that they spend on average over £5,000 in the first year of their baby's life and almost £1,500 before the child is born. (*Sun*, 21 Sep 2010, p20)

A survey of 3,000 parents for **TheBabyWebsite** found that fathers tend to do parenting jobs such as repairing toys, dressing children, teaching their children to swim or play sports with them, while mothers' roles included making packed lunches, wrapping presents and ironing their children's clothes. Nigel Crawford, of **TheBabyWebsite**, said "Although dads pull their weight, the jobs they are assigned tend to be more fun and less of the dirty work. Interestingly, men and women are agreed that mums get the roughest deal". (*Express*, 23 Sep 2010, p27; *Mail*, 23 Sep 2010, p3; *Mirror*, 23 Sep 2010, p27)

Aaronovitch, D.; There's more to fairness than what you earn.

In the *Times*' *Opinion* piece, David Aaronovitch argues that universal benefits are a way for society to show it supports those who deserve help, irrespective of need. He writes "There is a forgotten reason for universal child benefit...in paying it, society recognises the extra costs and responsibilities incurred by those with children - as opposed to those without - and agrees in some way to help them through that period". He adds "A fair society does something to try and bring disabled people (and their families) back to parity with the able-bodied". He refers to a local council that is asking the parents of children with special needs to pay for half of their transport costs. "It is...likely that the parents of such children earn less than average. And it is virtually certain that they have other costs associated with the problems their children suffer. It is a fairness no-no". (*Times*, 23 Sep 2010, p25)

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Death

The inquest into the death of 17-year-old Clementine Nicholson, who died from meningitis-related blood poisoning, heard that the condition needs to be treated within six hours if there is to be a chance of survival. Clementine collapsed while at **Rugby School** in Warwickshire on 6 May and was taken to **Walsgrave Hospital** in Coventry. She died the next day of meningococcal septicaemia. The inquest at Coventry magistrates court heard that after admittance to hospital, she went "missing" after being sent to two different wards before being admitted to intensive care. The inquest also noted that there was a period of three hours in which there were no notes on her file. The inquest was adjourned until 6 October, when Dr Nishant Patodi will give evidence. (*Mail*, 22 Sep 2010, p7; *Mirror*, 22 Sep 2010, p10; *Sun*, 22 Sep 2010, p12; *Telegraph*, 22 Sep 2010, p17; *Times*, 22 Sep 2010, p13)

Disability

Harrison, D.; The boy with a message of hope.

Pauline Booth's 20-year-old son, Paul, is competing in the **2010 Special Olympics European Games**, which took place in Warsaw, Poland, this week. She describes the "challenges" of raising a child with Down's syndrome and her family's joy when he was chosen to take part in the international event. Mrs Booth said Paul's achievements "sends out a message of hope to other Down's syndrome families that many things which seem impossible can be achieved". (*Sunday Telegraph*, 19 Sep 2010, p22)

Drug Misuse

The **Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs** recommends banning imports of anabolic steroids after growing concerns that teenage boys are using them to improve their body image. More than 6,000 schoolchildren aged 11 to 15 admit to taking physique-enhancing drugs regularly, according to the **ACMD**. Its chair, Professor Leslie Iversen said steroids were too easily available: "If you search online you will see endless offers. [The Council] thinks [an import ban] would have a considerable dampening effect on demand...There is no question that the number using the drug for sporting reasons is now a minority. the real growth has come in young users who want to improve their body image". (*Guardian*, 22 Sep 2010, p14; *Telegraph*, 22 Sep 2010, p6)

Education

At the **Liberal Democrat Party** conference this week, delegates voted to boycott the coalition government's education policy on free schools - schools that are outside the control of local authorities. Despite the Education Minister Sarah Teather's claims that the policy was a "fundamentally liberal" plan, conference decided that free schools increased "social divisiveness and inequality". (*Express*, 21 Sep 2010, p4; *Independent*, 21 Sep 2010, p6; *Mail*, 21 Sep 2010, p2; *Telegraph*, 21 Sep 2010, p12; *Times*, 21 Sep 2010, p9)

Independent schools' sixth forms are to be opened up to state pupils. David Levin, the new President of the **Headmasters and Head Mistresses' Conference** will reveal his plans next week. The scheme will focus on pupils who want to study subjects described as "strategic but vulnerable", such as maths, science and modern foreign languages, where teacher shortages have hampered take-up in some state schools. Mr Levin has held talks with two bankers in an attempt to raise funds for bursaries. (*Independent*, 24 Sep 2010, p24)

Gilbert, G.; The six secrets of a happy classroom.

Professor Dylan Wiliam describes his unorthodox ideas to help children learn better. His ideas form part of the **BBC2 TV** series, *The Classroom Experiment*, which is broadcast as part of the School Season of programmes. One idea to increase pupil participation is for the teacher to write the names of all pupils on lollipop sticks and then pulls them out at random from a pot so that any of the pupils can be asked a question. Traffic light cups

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are also one of Professor Wiliam's ideas. The cups are painted green, amber and red and pupils then put a cup on their desk to inform the teacher whether they have understood what has just been taught (green), or whether they are uncertain (amber) or do not understand (red). *The Classroom Experiment* starts on 27 September on BBC2. (*Independent*, 23 Sep 2010, pp48-49)

Sollis, A.; Multilingual schools can still achieve impressive results.

Anita Sollis, head of ethnic minority achievement at **Southfields Community College**, said parents should not assume that pupils with little English will hold their children back. She responds to a previous article in *The Guardian* by Andrew Penman, who called the school's results "rubbish" and implied this was due to the fact that pupils there spoke over 71 first languages. Sollis writes "Children who have come to Britain to escape war and deprivation believe passionately in the power of education to help them attain a better life. They are hungry to learn and often act as positive role models for other pupils, achieving top grades across a range of subjects in many schools" (*Guardian*, 22 Sep 2010, p37)

Employment

Papworth, J.; Why teenagers who want to work find child's pay is anything but child's play.

In a study of 14 to 19-year-olds by the international bank **Santander**, one in four said it was harder to find work than a year ago and one in eight believe it will affect their ability to manage money in the future. The report found that most teenagers rely on pocket money and top it up by working part-time. Their average income is £46 a month. Children can be generally be employed from age 14. The local authority will list the specific jobs they are allowed to do along with regulations governing how long they can work each day and each week. Children cannot work before 7am or after 7pm. If children work before school they are allowed to work for a maximum of one hour. They cannot work for longer than four hours without taking a break of at least one hour. During term time they can work for a maximum of 12 hours a week. Fifteen and 16-year-old can work up to 35 hours a week, with a maximum of eight hours on weekdays and Saturdays and two hours on Sunday. There are no laws which govern informal types of work such as babysitting or doing chores for neighbours. However, the **NSPCC** and the **Children's Legal Centre NI** recommend that no one under 16 be left alone to look after a child. Once a child is over 16 and left school, they become a "young worker" and have different employment rights. There is no minimum wage for workers under 16, but those aged 16 to 17 are entitled to £3.64 per hour and an apprentice wage will be introduced from October 2010 of £2.50 per hour. (*Guardian, Money*, 18 Sep 2010, p6)

Environment

From a poll of 1,000 people, 42% of adults said they came under pressure from their children to be environmentally friendly and that their children were more influential than scientists, politicians and celebrities. The poll was carried out by **EDF**. (*Telegraph*, 20 Sep 2010, p2)

Exploitation

New research from the **International Centre for the Study of Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young People** was presented to a conference on child protection this week. It reveals that most parts of the country do not have sufficient plans or resources to protect children from sexual abuse. Almost a third of local authorities have no plans to protect children from exploitation and investigate abusers, while less than a quarter are proactive in disrupting and prosecuting offenders. The Centre is located in the **Institute of Applied Social Research** at the **University of Bedford**. (*Independent on Sunday*, 19 Sep 2010, p24)

Website Link: <http://www.beds.ac.uk/research/iasr/intcent>

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Family Breakdown

Sir Nicholas Wall, England's most senior family court judge, has "condemned" the "well-educated parents who wage war over their children after separation". He said separating parents "rarely behave reasonably" and "have no idea how much damage they inflict on their children with protracted custody battles and personal attacks on one another". In a speech to the **Families Need Fathers** charity, he called for parents to work out how to minimise the damage when separating and proposed compulsory mediation before cases come before the family courts. In the *Guardian* (23 Sep, p34), Zoe Williams argues that "It is not intelligent couples who prolong separations", as Judge Wall argues, "but the adversarial family courts". (*Guardian*, 21 Sep 2010, p11; *Mail*, 21 Sep 2010, p4; *Telegraph*, 21 Sep 2010, p15; *Times*, 21 Sep 2010, p1, p11; *Mail*, 22 Sep 2010, p30; *Guardian*, 23 Sep 2010, p34)

Gender

Fine, C.; Let's end the great gender lie.

Cordelia Fine, author of *Delusions of Gender: the real science behind sex differences*, (**Icon Books**, £14.99) writes of the "casual sexism" she came across while growing up in Edinburgh, where girls were taught to sew and boys did woodwork, to her time as a mother when her "feminist fire - my inner spitter if you will" was rekindled. She writes "I was struck by how many parents seemed to see their children through the 'lens of gender'". (*Guardian, Family*, 18 Sep 2010, p3)

Health

Scientists at the **University of California** have discovered evidence of a virus, adenovirus 36, that could cause obesity. They have called the illness "infectobesity" - obesity that is transmitted from person to person, much like an infection. The scientists found that children who showed evidence of infection with adenovirus 36 were more likely to be fat. In tests on 124 children aged eight to 18, the virus was present in more than 20% of those who were obese. Among those infected with adenovirus 36, four out of five were obese. Children carrying the virus weighed on average almost 50lb more than those who did not have the virus. Jeffrey Schwimmer, an associate professor of clinical paediatrics who led the study, said "This amount of extra weight is a major concern at any age, but is especially so for a child. Obesity is a marker for future health problems like heart disease, liver disease and diabetes". The study is published in the journal *Pediatrics*. (*Mail*, 20 Sep 2010, p11; *Independent*, 21 Sep 2010, p10)

Childhood asthma is not caused by allergies, according to an international study involving 26,000 volunteers. The researchers found that the presence of genes which cause allergies had little effect on the presence of the disease. The study, led by Professor Miriam Moffatt of **Imperial College London**, is published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. (*Mirror*, 23 Sep 2010, p24; *Telegraph*, 23 Sep 2010, p2)

Higher Education

Britain's top universities are failing to attract young people from low-income households despite offering bursaries, according to a report by the **Office for Fair Access**. Have bursaries influenced choices between universities has found that universities spent £591m on bursaries between 2006 and 2008, compared with £84m on outreach work. It suggests that universities waive tuition fees for poorer students. Students from richer families are 5.1 times more likely to go to an elite university compared with 4.6 times in the mid 1990s. Sir Martin Harris, Director of **OFFA**, said "These findings show that issues surrounding widening access to the most selective universities go much deeper than purely financial obstacles. Fee waivers are definitely worth exploring, particularly schemes where the benefits can be clearly understood and communicated". (*Guardian*, 23 Sep 2010, p9; *Independent*, 23 Sep 2010, p18)

Document Link: <http://www.offa.org.uk/publications/>

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Mothers have the strongest influence on children's educational achievements, according to research by Professor Ian Walker at **Lancaster University** and academics at **Warwick University** and **University College Dublin**. The study, part-funded by **The Treasury**, found a strong correlation between the level of education of mothers and their daughters, a weaker link between those of mothers and sons, but no statistical significant influence from a father's education. The researchers analysed the number of years for which teenagers stayed on in full-time education after the age of 16. They studied data for 43,000 teenagers who had been questioned between 1993 and 2006 and compared them with their parents. They found that for every year a woman stayed on in education, the likelihood of her daughter staying an extra year increased by 20% and for her son by 10%. For fathers there was no consistent or significant effect. Professor Walker said "Our findings are good news for social mobility...If you look at the participation rates for higher education because the increase has been much higher for women" . (*Sunday Times, 19 Sep 2010, p15*)

Harris, J.; Food for thought.

Students from poor backgrounds have an uphill struggle to get into Oxford or Cambridge universities, with just 4% of pupils eligible for free school meals at 15 going on to university. John Harris asks what happens to the "few who make it in". (*Guardian, 18 Sep 2010, pp26-27*)

International

A summit in New York to discuss the international millennium goals will focus on the lives of women and young children. Sarah Brown, who will host a meeting with some of the world's most influential women, tells the *Guardian* that preventing deaths in pregnancy and childbirth was "one of the greatest opportunities of our time". She adds "If we can fix things for mothers, we can fix so many other things that are wrong in the world...Women are at the heart of every family, every nation. It's mostly mothers who make sure children are loved, fed, vaccinated, educated. You just can't build healthy, peaceful, prosperous societies without making life better for women". The *Guardian* includes a special report on the ten babies born in 2005 on whom the paper chose to focus in its **Make Poverty History** campaign in Africa. The paper has pledged to track the ten children up to 2015 - the date the world has set for achieving the millennium development goals. At the summit, the UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon, urged the 140 world leaders not to shirk the commitments they made ten years ago to end global poverty and to support the vulnerable during economic recession. He said "We should not balance the budgets on the back of the poor. We must not draw back from official development assistance - a lifeline of billions for billions". (*Independent on Sunday, 19 Sep 2010, pp28-29; Observer, 19 Sep 2010, p19; Guardian, 20 Sep 2010, pp1-2, pp19-23; Guardian, 21 Sep 2010, p18*)

Manchester magistrates court heard how a 10-year-old boy, known as Child M, was traumatised by his detention in **Yarl's Wood**. Child M and his mother, Farah Ghaemi, sought a judicial review of the order to deport them to Iran, where Ghaemi faces arrest for distributing *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie. Judge Pelling ruled there was no basis for Child M to stay in the UK, where he has been living for the past three years, and must be returned to Iran as soon as possible. (*Guardian, 23 Sep 2010, p7*)

Mental Health

Crace, J.; The kids aren't alright.

Thousands of under-16s are on anti-depressants and mental health problems among young people are increasing, writes John Crace. He asks why children are being diagnosed with mental health problems at ever younger ages and questions the use of drugs for treatment. (*Guardian Weekend, 18 Sep 2010, pp40-53*)

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Obituary

Mildred Blaxter, a sociologist who shed new light on the causes of deprivation, has died aged 85. Her first and influential study, *The Meaning of Disability* (1976), used longitudinal qualitative research - measuring changes over time - to explore the experiences of 100 people in the years after discharge from hospital. Mildred argued that "privilege is...transmitted intergenerationally". (*Guardian*, 22 Sep 2010, p39)

Professor James Tanner, a paediatrician who pioneered the use of growth charts, has died aged 90. Tanner, who became Emeritus Professor of Child Health and Growth at the **University of London**, pioneered through his work into pubertal development, universal acceptance of the Tanner stages or Tanner scaling as the most appropriate method to assess pubertal development. (*Times*, 22 Sep 2010, p61)

Play

Barbly Community Primary School in Selby, North Yorks, has banned ball games for its pupils at playtime because of complaints of noise from three neighbours. The school is also building a soundproof fence at a cost of £10,000 and has hired a noise consultant. Local councillor Brian Marshall said "Why did these people who are complaining buy a house next to a school? Children should be allowed to play football". A spokesman for **Selby Council** said "We have a statutory responsibility to follow up noise complaints". (*Telegraph*, 18 Sep 2010, p12; *Mirror*, 20 Sep 2010, p20; *Sun*, 20 Sep 2010, p6)

Politics

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's speech to the **Liberal Democrat Party Conference** this week in Liverpool will emphasise the temporary nature of the coalition government, but he will also argue that working with the Conservatives for this Parliament is a necessity. In restating the case for the coalition, Clegg will focus on explaining its decision to eradicate the structural deficit in one Parliament. In the *Independent* (20 Sep, pp4-5) Paul Vallely looks at the effects that this is having in one area of Merseyside, just over a mile away from the conference. In Everton Brow, budget cuts mean the Future Jobs scheme is being axed, free sports and recreational facilities for young people have already been cut and free fruit and vegetables for primary school children have been reduced. Projects to stop smoking and drinking have also been cut along with grants for families with children with special educational needs. The area has also lost £350m for 26 new schools. The area based grant, that funded schemes to help older people and was to install new street lights for "crime hotspots", has been cut by £10m. (*Guardian*, 18 Sep 2010, pp10-11; *Sunday Mirror*, 19 Sep 2010, p19; *Guardian*, 20 Sep 2010, p1, pp4-5, p30; *Independent*, 20 Sep 2010, pp4-5; *Mirror*, 20 Sep 2010, p14; *Express*, 21 Sep 2010, p4; *Guardian*, 21 Sep 2010, pp1-2, pp4-5, p30; *Independent*, 21 Sep 2010, p2, p6; *Mail*, 21 Sep 2010, pp10-11; *Mirror*, 21 Sep 2010, pp8-9; *Sun*, 21 Sep 2010, p6)

Population

A survey of sexual identity by the **Office for National Statistics** shows that almost three-quarters of a million people are gay or lesbian - a much lower figure than previously used by government. However, gay rights campaigners say this is a reflection of a reluctance among some people to admit their sexuality. The findings, based on interviews with 450,000 adults, also show that the majority of the gay and lesbian community are middle-class, work in professional or management jobs and are better educated than straight people. 17% are aged 16 to 24 and 45% cohabit, but only 8.6% live with at least one child. (*Guardian*, 24 Sep 2010, p9; *Independent*, 24 Sep 2010, p10; *Mirror*, 24 Sep 2010, p18; *Sun*, 24 Sep 2010, p12; *Telegraph*, 24 Sep 2010, p1; *Times*, 24 Sep 2010, p3)

Poverty & Social Exclusion

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In the *Daily Mail*, Jill Kirby, of the **Centre for Policy Studies**, criticises a report to the Education Secretary Michael Gove by the **Family and Parenting Institute (FPI)** because it supports increasing benefits for working parents as a means of supporting families rather than introducing the *Married Couples' Tax Allowance*. Dr Katherine Rake, head of the **FPI**, told a conference last year that the *Married Couples' Tax Allowance* "did not work". She added "It is costly to administer and there were problems with how to deal with dual declaration of earnings...Money should be put into relationship support, child poverty and good housing, all of which aid family stability". (*Mail*, 22 Sep 2010, p18)

Pregnancy & Child Birth

Population Trends, published by the **Office for National Statistics** this week, includes a study by the University of Southampton on fertility in women. The study found that women are having fewer children than they anticipated and at a later age than they had planned. The average child-bearing age is now 29.3 years - the highest since records began in 1938. This was attributed to the increasing number of women concentrating on their careers, being unable to afford large families or just not finding the right partner. (*Express*, 24 Sep 2010, p15; *Independent*, 24 Sep 2010, p19; *Telegraph*, 24 Sep 2010, p7)

Document Link: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/populationtrends/ptissue/>

Racism

Writing in the journal *Prospect*, Dr Tony Sewell, a former teacher and consultant at **Reading University**, argues that black children do badly at school because they do not pay attention and get little support from their parents. He said "What we now see in schools is children undermined by poor parenting, peer-group pressure and an inability to be responsible for their own behaviour...They are not subjects of institutional racism. They have failed their GCSEs because they did not do the homework, did not pay attention and were disrespectful". Dr Sewell is the Director of **Generating Genius**, which seeks to get more black and mixed race boys into university. (*Mail*, 23 Sep 2010, p28; *Telegraph*, 23 Sep 2010, p12)

Sex & Relationships Education

NCFE, previously known as the **Northern Council for Further Education**, has been accredited for its sexual health course by **Ofqual**. Level 1 award is equivalent to GCSE grades D to G. Students between the ages of 14 and 16 will be encouraged to take the course. The **Department for Education** said "We rightly trust heads to choose what is best for their pupils". (*Express*, 18 Sep 2010, p8; *Mail*, 18 Sep 2010, p8; *Telegraph*, 18 Sep 2010, p15)

Sexual Health

One in four sexually active young people in the UK does not use contraception with a new partner, according to an international poll by **Marie Stopes International** for *World Contraception Day* on 26 September. Of those who did not use contraception, 16% said they had forgotten, 13% said their partner preferred not to use it and 19% said they failed to take precautions because they were drunk. Tracey McNeill, Vice-President of **Marie Stopes International** in Europe and the UK, said "We are calling on the coalition government to put sex and relationships education back on the agenda and ensure that all schools, including faith schools, teach a standardised curriculum to 15-year-olds". She added "Where sex and relationships education is taught in conjunction with contraceptive information, more young people practice safe sex ". The survey also found that 32% of young people in the UK said they felt confused about contraception and did not know which was the best method for them, and 19% believed the "withdrawal method" to be an effective form of contraception. (*Express*, 20 Sep 2010, p25; *Guardian*, 20 Sep 2010, p13; *Mirror*, 20 Sep 2010, p24)

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Social Policy

Paul Burstow, the Liberal Democrat minister for care, announced this week that the coalition government is to give everyone who uses social care services control of their own budgets. Burstow says the overhead costs are no greater and the scheme will be revenue neutral, but acknowledges the overall pot of money will be reduced during the forthcoming *Comprehensive Spending Review*. A report by **Demos** last year estimated that 80% of social care and health users did not understand personal budgets. Local authority leaders have warned that school transport services for children with special needs or disabilities are under threat from cuts in the *Comprehensive Spending Review* and that parents are being asked to cover any shortfall or to car-share as a result. Councils are legally bound to provide "adequate free transport" for under-16s who live more than three miles from their allocated school. For children aged under eight, the limit is two miles. The **Local Government Association** said councils also have the right to offer discretionary free transport on the grounds of "exceptional circumstances", medical reasons or because they are going to a faith school further away than their nearest school. Figures submitted to the **Department for Education** show that £463m is spend on taxi fares and free transport for non-disabled pupils who live more than three miles away from school or have been expelled from their nearest school. A further £604m covers private transport for those with special needs or disabilities. (*Guardian*, 22 Sep 2010, p13; *Times*, 22 Sep 2010, p3)

One hundred and seventy-seven government-funded organisations are to be scrapped by the coalition government, according to a leaked **Cabinet Office** document obtained by the *Telegraph* and *Independent*. Among those being abolished are: the **Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy**; the **Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV**; **General Social Care Council**; **School Food Trust**; **Disability Living/Attendance Allowance Board**; and the **Expert Advisory Group on HIV/AIDs**. A further 94 bodies are under review. These include: the **Children's Workforce Development Council** and **Independent Safeguarding Authority**. The 350 bodies to be retained include: **Ofsted**; **Big Lottery Fund**; and **Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs**. Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary and Caroline Spelman, the Environment Secretary, have been given seats on the Cabinet's Star Chamber, which will impose cuts on those ministers who cannot reach agreement with the **Treasury**. Ministers already serving on the Star Cabinet have reached a provisional settlement on their department spending for four years. They are William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, Francis Maude and Oliver Letwin at the Cabinet Office and Chancellor George Osborne and Danny Alexander, the Liberal Democrat Chief Treasury Secretary. (*Independent*, 24 Sep 2010, p6; *Telegraph*, 24 Sep 2010, p1, p4)

Sport

An evaluation of **Street Chance**, a project organised by the **Cricket Foundation** charity that has been running in 15 London boroughs, found that cricket can help break down rivalries between teenagers in urban areas. Researchers at the **University of Loughborough** found that the game was a good "leveller" in areas that were high in crime and anti-social behaviour. The report said "It was felt that the sense of belonging to a team and having responsibility towards their team mates might help to deter young people from associating with gangs". (*Telegraph*, 21 Sep 2010, p8)

Figures from the **Department for Education** show that more than six out of ten pupils do not take part in regular competitive sport at school, but 86% of five to 16-year-olds do at least two hours of PE per week. Boys are more likely to take part in competitive sports and the sex differences are more marked as children get older. The figures show that schools are offering a range of alternative sporting activities to get children active, including yoga, cheerleading and trampolining. Steve Granger, Chief Executive of the **Youth Sport Trust**, which encourages schools to take up sport, said "There's a growing

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pool of anecdotal evidence that if you get kids involved in things like cheerleading, they learn to be part of a team and will then transition into traditional team games like netball". Football is the top school sport but there have been increases in the take-up of canoeing, archery and martial arts. Dance is the second most popular activity, and is offered in 96% of schools. (*Guardian*, 24 Sep 2010, p3; *Mail*, 24 Sep 2010, p7; *Telegraph*, 24 Sep 2010, p12)

Transport

Road safety campaigners have called for young drivers, aged between 17 and 21, to be banned from driving alone at night, drinking alcohol and carrying teenage passengers to prevent them from being distracted and having an accident. Delegates at the **Safety 2010** conference in London heard that the measures could prevent up to 200 deaths every year. Dr Sarah Jones, of Cardiff's Department of Primary Care, analysed every road crash in the UK from 2000 to 2007 involving drivers aged 17 to 19. Dr Jones supports the introduction of Graduated Licensing (GDL) schemes such as those operated in New Zealand, Canada and many parts of the USA. She said "GDL works in other countries and there's no good reason why it wouldn't work here. The cost to the NHS would be significantly reduced". (*Mail*, 21 Sep 2010, p12; *Times*, 21 Sep 2010, p5; *Telegraph*, 22 Sep 2010, p14)

Violence

A study by the **World Health Organisation** has found that knives were used in four out of ten killings of young people in the UK, but the country has one of the lowest knife death rates in Europe. The UK knife death rate is 0.23 deaths per 100,000 people. **WHO** say 15,000 young people were killed in Europe every year, with 40% of these deaths involving knives. It says that much of the violence could be prevented by using a public health approach. Zsuzsanna Jakab, **WHO** Regional Director for Europe, said "There is much to be gained by adapting the experiences of some of the most successful European countries in preventing violence". It points out the UK as an example of violence prevention: "If all countries reached the same homicide rates as the lowest in the region, Europe could potentially save over 13,000 young lives per year. In other words, nine out of ten such deaths could be avoided. This makes compelling arguments [for] increased investment in violence prevention". (*Guardian*, 22 Sep 2010, p5)

Wellbeing

Wellington College, an independent boarding school in Berkshire, is extending its wellbeing classes to parents and offering weekend taster sessions costing £40 per person. The £9,000-a-term school introduced wellbeing and happiness lessons for pupils four years ago. The head teacher Anthony Seldon said "Teaching wellbeing has contributed significantly to the positive changes at our school, including an atmosphere of encouragement and a zero tolerance attitude to teachers treating children unkindly". (*Telegraph*, 20 Sep 2010, p7)

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