<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Update</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Foster carers facing 'poverty' over inadequate Staying Put funding</td>
<td>Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DfE charges 'inadequate' council over children's centre cuts</td>
<td>CYP Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Youth custody levels show annual rise for first time in nine years</td>
<td>Youth Justice Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Custodial sentences for knife possession on the rise</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prevent concerns from Muslim Youth Group and teachers</td>
<td>British Muslim Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Children’s Principal Social Worker role ‘failed spectacularly’</td>
<td>Tony Stanley, Chief Social Worker at Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Government-run secure training centre rated 'inadequate' again</td>
<td>CYP Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Benefit cap for lone parents with toddlers is unlawful</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Early childhood education improves life chances, study finds</td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mental health system 'failing' young people, warns thinktank</td>
<td>Localis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Report shows 200% increase in emotional abuse of children</td>
<td>NSPCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Making Connections: understanding how local agencies can better keep missing children safe</td>
<td>The Children's Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Talking Heads: The views of London’s school leaders on future challenges</td>
<td>London Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>This is my home: securing permanent status for long-term resident children and young people in the UK</td>
<td>Coram Children’s Legal Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation - Enhanced dataset</td>
<td>NHS Digital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>From Care to Independence: evaluation of the Fairbridge programme</td>
<td>Prince's Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>British Sikh couple take legal action after being advised not to adopt</td>
<td>The Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>One in four mums placed for adoption grew up in care, finds study</td>
<td>Children and Youth Services Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Social Workers and Information Technology</td>
<td>NHS Digital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Empower Parents: evaluation of parents as partners in safeguarding children and young people in Lancashire project</td>
<td>University of Bedfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation/Government</td>
<td>Community Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Minister for Children and Families</strong></td>
<td>Community Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysing family circumstances and education.</strong></td>
<td>Gov.UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline extended to 11.45 p.m. on 31 July 2017.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short inspections of good schools</strong></td>
<td>Gov.UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for submissions: 18 August 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ofsted launches point-in-time questionnaires</strong></td>
<td>Gov.UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for responses: 13 August 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Updates

The following section provides a brief summary of the legislative and policy updates provided in the above table. There are 24 items included in the report, and hyperlinks to the full reports and/or original sources can be found in the table above.

Foster carers facing ‘poverty’ over inadequate Staying Put funding

1. The Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers (NAFP) has said that the government is pushing foster carers towards poverty by underfunding the Staying Put policy. In a pre-election briefing, the association said underfunding the policy that supports young people to stay with their former foster carers after they turn 18 had left carers ‘unable to afford to pay basic bills and continue to care for young people’.

2. The NAFP has called for the Government to introduce a minimum allowance for foster carers looking after young people up to the age of 21.

DfE charges ‘inadequate’ council over children’s centre cuts

3. A Freedom of Information (FOI) request obtained by Children and Young People Now shows that the government has penalised Sandwell Council under a contractual ‘clawback’ system to the tune of £88,009. As part of Sure Start funding arrangements local authorities are required to notify the DfE of proposals to ‘dispose of or change the use of buildings or assets funded wholly or partly through Sure Start capital grants’ and must provide details of the level of early years services that will continue. The DfE then decides whether the council is continuing to provide a sufficient level of early years services to meet the original aims of the grant. If it decides they are not, it is able to reclaim capital funding.

4. In 2015, Sandwell announced it was cutting opening hours at eight out of 20 sites across the borough in order to make savings of £2.5m in 2015/16 and 2016/17. News of the penalty charge come as efforts to improve services at the local authority continue. Children’s minister Edward Timpson announced in October 2016 that an independent trust must be established to run children’s services in Sandwell, following three ‘inadequate’ judgements by Ofsted between 2013 and 2015.

Youth custody levels show annual rise for first time in nine years

5. Statistics published by the Youth Justice Board show that there were 909 under-18s in custody in April this year – an increase of 51 (or 5.9%) on the figure for March of 858. It is the first annual increase since August 2008, when the figure rose from 2,991 to 3,019. Youth custody levels fell to a historic low in December 2016, but have been rising since then.

Custodial sentences for knife possession on the rise

6. Data published by the Ministry of Justice shows that custodial sentences for knife possession are on the rise. 13% of juvenile offenders were given an immediate custodial sentence, compared to six per cent in the same months of 2008. Conversely,
the proportion of juvenile offenders receiving a caution has fallen by 19 percentage points over the same period.

7. Meanwhile, the Mayor of London launched his new Knife Crime Strategy, with an additional £625,000 investment. The strategy highlights a new programme being trialled in Lambeth and Wandsworth working in primary schools to prevent youth knife crime and gang involvement, supported by MOPAC and the Early Intervention Foundation.

**Prevent concerns from Muslim Youth Group and teachers**

8. The leader of British Muslim Youth, a youth group that works with young Muslims, has criticised the government's Prevent anti-radicalisation strategy, claiming it is considered such a ‘toxic’ brand among young people that his organisation avoids involvement with it.

9. In addition, concerns have been raised by school and college staff in England that the government anti-radicalisation strategy is increasing stigmatisation of Muslim students. A study by three universities – Coventry, Durham, and Huddersfield – found evidence that the Prevent duty may be making Muslim students feel ‘singled out’ and damaging their willingness to share genuine concerns about extremism. There were also ‘significant concerns’ about the stigmatisation of Muslim students as well as fears that the Prevent duty is making it more difficult to foster an inclusive environment for students from different backgrounds.

10. The research also highlighted a degree of ‘discomfort’ and ‘uncertainty’ among school and college staff about what some saw as the Prevent duty’s ill conceived focus on ‘British values’. A minority of education professionals argued that the duty might be counterproductive in preventing those who are vulnerable from being drawn into terrorism.

11. Further coverage on Prevent this month include: Community Care published an article where a social worker shares their concerns about radicalisation, Prevent and its focus on Muslims rather than on far right groups. Waqar Ahmed, Prevent Manager, defended the Prevent programme in The MJ, while recognising that ‘by no means do we have it 100% right’. He notes that while people debate the need for an independent review of Prevent at a national level, at a local level there was nothing stopping local authorities and partnerships constantly reviewing their own practice.

**Children’s Principal Social Worker role ‘failed spectacularly’**

12. Speaking at Frontline’s Consultant Social Work Conference, Tony Stanley, chief social worker at Birmingham Council and a former principal social worker (PSW) has said the PSW role in children’s services was weak and at risk of being weakened further as local council budgets shrink. He argued that the adults’ PSW role was better defined and the inclusion of it in statutory guidance underpinning the Care Act 2014 had helped this group be more effective in articulating their importance to the system.

13. Tony Stanley described children’s PSWs as being ‘pulled in every direction’ since the role was recommended in Eileen Munro’s 2011 review of child protection. Unless there is change, Stanley warned that the role could disappear in the next 12-18 months and that PSWs, as a network, had failed to have a national impact by debating key topics and making public comment on social issues. He noted that some councils were still failing to carry out social work health checks, which he described as a key role of
the children’s PSW. Wandsworth carried out a Social Work Health Check during the summer of 2016.

**Government-run secure training centre rated ‘inadequate’ again**

14. A secure training centre in Kent that was taken over by the government after allegations of abuse emerged has been rated ‘inadequate’ by inspectors for the second time in less than a year. The rating follows a visit conducted in March 2017, which raised concerns around the use of force, child safeguarding and the quality of staff. Wandsworth Council does not currently have any young people placed in the centre.

**Benefit cap for lone parents with toddlers is ‘unlawful’**

15. The government’s cap on benefits lone parents with children under two can receive has been dismissed by a high court judge as unlawful and discriminatory. Mr Justice Collins said the policy had inflicted ‘real damage’ on families and warned that ‘real misery is being caused to no good purpose’. The judge ruled that lone parents with children under two did not qualify for free childcare and so would find it difficult and often impossible to juggle working the minimum 16 hours a week required to evade the cap while finding means to care for the child.

**Early childhood education improves life chances, study finds**

16. Children who have had high quality early childhood education do better later in life, a new international study has confirmed. The organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development found that they achieve much better scores in international Pisa tests at the age of 15. Students who had attended early childhood education for a year or more scored an average of 25 points higher in the Pisa science assessment compared with those who had not – 30 Pisa points is the equivalent of a school year.

17. Meanwhile, a Scottish parliamentary committee has warned that a rise in business rates will threaten nurseries. The petition to scrap business rates for child carers was submitted to the public petitions committee by the chair of a childcare charity, the National Day Nurseries Association. It is feared that the rise in business rates could force some nurseries to shut down and would also increase financial pressure on parents.

18. The National Day Nurseries Association have also stated that nurseries will receive an inadequate increase of 40p per hour funding in order to provide 30 hours of free childcare. A freedom of information request found that the average hourly rate for nurseries is £4.37 compared to £3.97 in 2016/17.

**Mental health system ‘failing’ young people warns thinktank**

19. Localis have released a report that finds the current mental health system is ‘failing children and young people’ and that ‘in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services something ah’s gone badly wrong’. They identify a serious failing where young people do not receive sustained support for their mental health, and only receive treatment when they reach crisis point, and even after treatment fall off the radar until they reach another crisis. It also found that young people often have a negative or inappropriate first contact with mental health services which inform their expectations of the quality of service they will receive.
• 58% of CCGs are not on course to hit their target of treating 35% of young people who have a clinically diagnosable mental health condition at an NHS funded community mental health service

• Whilst 75% of local transformation plans mention school-based approaches to mental health, only 40% refer to school-based counselling and only 3% have plans to commission for these services.

20. The report makes a series of recommendations for improving young people’s mental health services, which mainly revolve around improving access to support in schools, which has been found to be cost-effective and easily accessible to young people. This includes a recommendation that a statutory duty is placed on local authorities requiring them to provide school based support services for all young people aged 11-18 at state maintained schools. This would be funded through Councils retaining an element of the pupil premium. Academy funding arrangements would be altered to make it compulsory for them to offer services, and may opt into local authority provided services.

21. The Head of Youth Support Services for Wandsworth contributed to the report via a roundtable discussion. In Wandsworth an estimated 880 children and young people will receive community based mental health treatment by 2020.

Report shows 200% increase in emotional abuse of children

22. The NSPCC found that in recent years there has been an increase in emotional abuse as a reason for children being on a child protection plan or register in England and Wales, and increasing numbers of contacts to the NSPCC helpline about the issue. There has been an increase in public reporting of child abuse and in 2016/17 the NSPCC helpline responded to its highest ever number of contacts.

23. There has been an increase in police-recorded child sexual offences and indecent image offences across the UK and increases in child cruelty and neglect offences in all UK nations except Scotland. The last decade has also seen increased numbers of children on child protection plans and registers and increased numbers of looked after children in the UK.

Making Connections: understanding how local agencies can better keep missing children safe

24. This report from the Children’s Society explores how Children’s Services and the police work together to share key information about missing children to better inform risk assessment, and build local intelligence of places and adults that may pose a risk to children. It is based on responses from 104 English local authorities and 37 English police forces to FOIs sent in September 2016. Some of the report’s key findings include:

• Risk assessments made at the time a child is reported missing to the police are not fully informed by information that different safeguarding agencies have about the child.
Almost half of the local authorities that responded did not have an information sharing protocol agreement in place between themselves, the police and RHI providers for sharing information about missing children.

Two thirds of local authorities were not able to provide information on how many children were at risk due to the following factors: CSE, involvement with gangs, being a victim of crime, at risk of suicide, trafficking or due to substance abuse.

Only 82 local authorities out of 104 across England could answer about the number of RHIs they had conducted.

Under two thirds of local authorities that responded to the FOI do not share risk assessments with the local police for all looked after children that they host. When placing a child within the boundaries of another police force, just over a third of local authorities that responded do not notify the police force.

The report estimates that of the 41 who responded, 90% of cases host local authorities receive information about children within their boundaries either from placing local authorities or from the placement provider, leaving 10% of cases where local authorities are not notifying with some children coming to their attention only if they go missing or are criminally exploited.

Just under half of host local authorities did not offer RHIs to out of area children and young people.

**Talking Heads report**

25. London Councils commissioned a survey of 400 London headteachers which found that increased costs from new and increasing pressures are forcing headteachers to make tough decisions to balance their budgets.

- 70% of respondents had already experienced budget cuts, with 91% expecting their budget to decrease in the next two years.
- 70% of headteachers felt that pupil outcomes will be negatively affected.
- Headteachers rank managing their budgets as the number one challenge they face.
- Only 40% of London schools feel they are prepared for future cuts, with higher concerns in primary schools.
- 47% of secondary schools have reduced the breadth of the curriculum in response to funding cuts and 70% of primary schools have reduced the number of Teaching Assistants they employ.
- 65% of London secondary schools are planning to cut teacher numbers in the next two years.

26. Meanwhile, UNISON has published the findings of a survey of 1,400 school office employees. The survey found that administrative and finance staff carry out many duties that are crucial to the running of school and go ‘way beyond’ the support role suggested by their job titles.
This Is My Home Report

27. Coram Children’s Legal Centre published this report on the barriers to securing permanent status facing long-term resident children and young people who are currently undocumented or have temporary permission to remain in the UK. The report analyses a range of evidence, including Home Office data, FOI research and casework data. The report makes a number of recommendations for national and local government, including an urgent review of children and young people’s needs for legal services.

28. The report recommends that every local authority should ensure its staff working with children are trained and equipped with a basic understanding of the immigration system and processes in order to help them better support the children in their care. It recommends that every local authority designate a named social care lead on migrant children and young people, including asylum seekers and those who are undocumented.

29. The report follows the ‘A child is a child’ report from UNICEF which outlined the lack of safe and legal pathways for refugee and migrant children, which puts them at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.

30. Meanwhile, the Help Refugees charity has launched a legal action alleging that the government has failed to properly assess local councils’ capacity to take in unaccompanied minors under the Dubs Amendment. In the first year of the scheme 200 children were taken in and the scheme was closed after accepting 350. It is alleged that up to 1600 places offered by local councils were overlooked by the Home Office after being received after a ‘cut-off’ date.

Female Genital Mutilation Enhanced Dataset

31. The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Enhanced Dataset supports the Department of Health’s FGM Prevention Programme by presenting a national picture of the prevalence of FGM in England. Statistics for January to March 2017 were published this month and show that between January and March 2017 there were 2,102 attendances reported at NHS trusts and GP practices where FGM was identified or a procedure for FGM was undertaken. There were 1,236 women and girls who had their FGM information collected in the Enhanced Dataset for the first time, although this does not indicate how recently the FGM was undertaken, nor does it necessarily mean that this is the woman or girl’s first attendance for FGM.

32. NHS Digital published their Female Genital Mutilation Annual Report for 2016/17, which shows there were 5,391 newly recorded cases of FGM during 2016/17. Women and girls born in Somalia account for more than one third of newly recorded cases of FGM with a known country of birth. Of the newly recorded cases, 112 involved women and girls who were born in the UK. In 57 cases, the FGM was known to have been undertaken in the UK. The 5 – 9 year old age group was the most common age range at which FGM was undertaken. Almost half (48% - 2,560 cases) of all cases relate to women and girls from the London NHS Commissioning Region.

33. Meanwhile, Barnardo’s children’s charity is advising professionals, including teachers, of the signs a girl may be at risk of undergoing FGM as ‘cutting season’ approaches.
Care to Independence – evaluation of Fairbridge programme

34. This report presents key findings of the final phase of From Care to Independence, a five year project focusing on support for care leavers participating in the Fairbridge programme, delivered by The Prince’s Trust. The aim of the programme is to empower disengaged and marginalised young people by helping them to gain the skills needed to stabilise their life circumstances. The research draws on survey and interview data from young people and practitioners.

35. Some of the main challenges affecting care leavers joining the programme included having fewer than five GCSEs, including English and Maths, at Grades A* to C (87%), not being in education, employment, training or volunteering (78%), mental health problems (49%), history of offending (46%), problems in family relationships (37%), among others.

36. Based on exit data for 231 of those leaving Fairbridge, 62% had progressed to one or more of the following positive outcomes: a place in education; training, volunteering, paid work, an apprenticeship, self-employment, or a place on another Prince’s Trust programme. Other gains included steps towards EETV outcomes, such as improved readiness to work, commitment to achievable goals and more impressive CVs.

37. On the other hand, about a third of young people appeared to have disengaged or ‘dropped out’ rather than leaving due to achievement of EETV or other goals. Risk factors for disengagement included behavioural and relationship problems, substance misuse, difficulties with mental health or wellbeing, a perceived lack of support from social workers/personal advisers; financial or housing problems and low self-esteem/confidence.

38. Challenges around relationships, social support, mental health, motivation, debt, transport and substance misuse were linked with lower rates of EETV achievement. These issues were ongoing concerns for many leaving the programme, as were housing and behavioural problems. Practitioners argued that sustaining progress beyond the programme depended on young people having good support networks, and having their underlying needs met, particularly in relation to mental health.

British Sikh couple take legal action being advised not to adopt

39. A British Sikh couple are bringing a legal case, claiming they were advised by an adoption agency not to apply because of their ‘cultural heritage’. The couple said they had wanted to adopt a child of any ethnic background but they were told that, as only white children were in need, white British or European applicants would be given preference, meaning they were unlikely to be selected.

40. Adoption agencies are allowed to prioritise on the basis of race in order to match children to prospective parents of the same ethnic background but the government has also said that a child’s ethnicity should not be a barrier to adoption. The couple are applying to Slough County Court, seeking a declaration that the policy should allow them to adopt. Senior partner at the law firm representing the couple, Ann Olivarius, said that too little attention had been paid to the best interests of children in need of adoption.
One in four mums with children placed for adoption grew up in care

41. One in four mothers and a fifth of fathers of children placed for adoption grew up in state care, a study has found. Researchers at Cardiff University’s Children’s Social Care Research and Development Centre said there was an ‘urgent need’ to review parenting support for care leavers after their analysis found 27% of birth mothers and 19% of birth fathers of children placed for adoption were themselves care leavers.

42. The study was based on an analysis of 374 social work records for all children placed for adoption by councils in Wales between July 2014 and July 2015. This found care leaver birth mothers and fathers were more likely to have experienced childhood abuse and neglect than non-care leaver parents in the sample. It also found mothers who had grown up in care were more likely to have diagnosed mental health problems and were less likely to appeal an adoption plan than non-care leaver parents. The authors said the appeal findings could reflect care leaver parents having ‘limited resources to secure legal support to oppose local authority plans, or it could indicate the potential for care leaver parents to have had ‘fractious relationships with social workers’ in the past that left them feeling ‘powerless against the system’.

Social Workers and Information Technology

43. NHS Digital carried out research on social workers and the use of information technology. They found that social workers faced difficulties in their day-to-day practice relating to sharing information, its integration and the use of technology. Nearly three quarters of SWs said it was easy to share information with local authorities but considerably fewer said that the criminal justice system was easy to share information with.

44. All social workers had access to some form of technology for their job, but not everyone had access to a laptop, smart phone or tablet. Only two fifths of social workers use mobile devices during a face to face contact although this rises to nearly a half of those who work mainly with children and families. Two fifths of those who had used mobile devices during a face to face consultation said that it had a positive impact on the interaction.

45. Only a fifth of social workers were aware of NHS Digital, but the majority felt that NHS Digital had a role to play in social care.

Empowering Parents evaluation

46. The University of Bedfordshire’s International Centre and Parents against child sexual exploitation (Pace) have published an evaluation of the Parents as partners in safeguarding children and young people in Lancashire project, which was delivered from June 2014 to May 2017. This centred around the work of a Parent Liaison Officer who provided flexible one-to-one support to parents and families whose child was at risk, or a victim, of child sexual exploitation (CSE). Key findings include:

- The PLO helped parents to understand the dynamics of CSE and grooming and respond with more empathy to their child;
• parents were able to play a more active part in safeguarding their child;
• the PLO’s support was identified as a key contributor to maintaining a strong record of child/family attendance at court; and
• parents described themselves as more emotionally resilient and able to cope with the impact of CSE because of the PLO’s support.

New Minister for Children and Families

47. Edward Timpson, Children’s Minister since 2012, lost his seat in the General Election. Timpson had led on the coalition and Conservative government’s attempted sweeping reforms to children’s social work. He will be replaced by Robert Goodwill, who will also act as the new early years and childcare minister. Robert Goodwill has previously served as Minister of State for Immigration and Minister of State for Transport.

Analysing Family Circumstances and Education

48. The deadline has been extended on the government’s consultation on analysing family circumstances and education. The consultation will now be open until 11:45 p.m. on 31 July 2017. The consultation seeks views on the government’s preliminary investigation of the relationship between household income and education for pupils in schools in England.

Short inspections of good schools

49. The government seeks views on proposals for changes to the short inspection approach for good maintained schools and academies and outstanding and good maintained nurseries, special schools and pupil referral units from October 2017. There are two proposals:

50. Proposal 1: short inspections that convert to a section 5 inspection will now do so within a period of up to 15 working days of the short inspection. The conversion inspection would be at any point during that period, although we will aim to carry it out as soon as possible. If the conversion inspection is due to safeguarding concerns, our expectation is that it will continue to be within 48 hours.

51. Proposal 2: some good schools will receive a section 5 inspection from the outset instead of a short inspection if published information, Ofsted’s regional intelligence and Ofsted’s risk assessment process indicate that there will be a need to collect more evidence than is routinely gathered on a short inspection to reach a judgement about the school. All other good schools will continue to receive a short inspection.

52. Responses should be completed via an online questionnaire available on the government’s website. The deadline is 11.30 p.m. on 18 August 2017.
Ofsted launches point-in-time questionnaires

53. Ofsted has issued its annual point-in-time questionnaires to children’s social services. The questionnaires are about children’s homes, fostering services, adoption agencies, adoption support agencies and residential family centres.

54. Ofsted inspectors want to hear what children and young people, staff, social workers and other professionals have to say about these services and their responses will help inform future inspections.

55. Ofsted is asking for responses by 13 August 2017. In August 2017 Ofsted will also send questionnaires to residential provision in further education colleges and boarding and residential special schools.