

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Y 1,000 diwrnod cyntaf | First 1,000 Days

FTD 14

Ymateb gan : Canolfan Ymchwil a Datblygu Gofal Cymdeithasol Plant (CASCADE) – Prifysgol Caerdydd

Response from : Children’s Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE) – Cardiff University

1. We are making a submission under the theme of health inequalities, in the light of our recent four-nations research project on child welfare inequalities. The Nuffield Foundation funded a collaboration of seven universities to study the relationship between socio-economic inequality and child welfare intervention in the four nations of the UK, building on a pilot study in the English West Midlands. The Welsh arm of the research was conducted in Cardiff University.
2. The research in Wales involved analysing data on children on the child protection register and children looked after by the local authority (in care) on 31 March 2015. These data were in the Children in Need Census, obtained directly from local authorities, and the SSDA903 dataset on looked-after children, obtained from Welsh Government. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation was used to indicate the socio-economic profile of neighbourhoods. A derived UK IMD was also used for comparisons between the four nations. The unit of geography used was lower super output areas, each of which on average contains a population of around 1500.
3. The headline findings in Wales, using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, (WIMD) are that:
 - Children in the 10% most deprived areas are 15 times more likely to come into care than children in the 10% most affluent areas
 - Children in the 10% most deprived areas are 24 times more likely to be on the child protection register than children in the 10% most affluent areas

- There is a social gradient whereby for every decile (10%) increase in deprivation the rate of intervention goes up. This holds true for child protection and children looked after.
 - The social gradient is consistent for boys and girls and for all age groups
 - For looked-after children, this social gradient is steeper in Wales than in the other UK nations, meaning that in Wales we take proportionally more children into care in deprived areas and fewer in affluent areas. There is no significant difference for child protection, where the gradient is similar to that in other countries
 - When comparing ethnic categories, rates of children looked after are highest for mixed-race children, followed by Black children, then White children, with Asian rates much lower than any other groups. Child protection registration rates are different insofar as White and Black rates are very similar, though Asian rates are still lower and mixed-race rates higher.
 - In Wales, the rate at which mixed-race children are in care is inversely related to the proportion of mixed-race children in the local neighbourhood.
4. The connection between social deprivation and child welfare interventions is stark. It should be as much of a target for prevention as inequalities in health or education.
 5. There are various areas of policy where child welfare inequalities could be tackled. These include work to tackle adverse childhood experiences (which are concentrated in deprived areas), the Child Poverty Strategy and the work of public service boards.
 6. There are particular issues for social services, where a focus on material disadvantage, as well as psycho-social problems, needs to become mainstream practice.

The chart below compares looked-after children rates (per 10,000 children) in England and Wales. The rates per decile of deprivation are not the same as above because these are calculated using a derived Index of Multiple Deprivation for the whole UK. The difference between the highest and lowest decile on this measurement is even greater than it is using WIMD.

