

Questions and Answers

1. Questions about children's pathways and permanence status

5+ placement details Are the 5+ placements simply a count or does it take into account return to a previous caregiver?

Answer:

This is a count. We calculated the number of placements by summing the total number of 'rows' in the CLAS data that were recorded as placement types away from home (see page 21 in the main report). Unfortunately we are unable to establish if these involve the same or different carers.

S25 and Covid Is there any evidence as to whether the pandemic influenced the number of children still on s25 for 5+ years given impacts on social work, hearing system and courts?

Answer:

We didn't look specifically at the use of S25 related to Covid. However, some social workers did mention that the covid-19 pandemic caused delays in decision making relating to permanence (pages 26-27 in main report), and Covid is mentioned in other places throughout the main report.

Q- of the cyp still on S25, how many were living in kinship families?

Answer:

The majority - 55 of the 66 children on a S25 31 July 2022 were living in kinship families. See page 17 of the main report where we talk about this more - including the finding that children living with kinship carers (52%) were more likely to be looked after via S25 than children living with foster carers (7%) or in residential care (21%), who were more likely to be on a CSO.

Understand more about what's behind some of the notable statistics e.g. why so many children's ethnicities not recorded- what practice issues are behind that?

Answer:

Ethnicity is generally very poorly recorded across all forms of administration data and from my experience, the coverage in this study should be considered really very high and a strength of the study rather than a limitation.

2. Questions about contact, connections and support

Sibling like relationships Any examples of these being supported or maintained?

Answer:

In the report we discuss relationships with previous foster families (page 80). Relationships with previous carers and their families, including children, as well as relationships with children in respite/short break foster care, were discussed in some of the interviews and this is included on page 61 in the report.

Children and young people talked about older children of foster carers as their siblings, and they offered foster carers and children important support.

3. General questions

Is there a reason behind using the words siblings and placement in the PowerPoint? With moving towards a major shift in language, I found this confusing.

Answer:

We acknowledge that during the presentation we at times moved into using institutional, practice-speak and we are working on getting better at it. Please see the answer below as well .

I wondered about the use of language in the report, children have asked us not to use 'siblings' or 'placement'

Answer:

Language is important and we acknowledge this in the report in relation to the word placement, permanence, birth parents, caregivers and brothers and sisters. We tried to be as sensitive as we can, but we won't always get it right. We struggled with the word placement and tried to use different words as much as we could. For a while we used the wording 'situations intended to be permanent' but that made the writing and wording very difficult to follow. In the report wherever we could, we talked about children's homes and children living with caregivers.

Throughout the report we generally use 'brothers and sisters' to reflect the language children and young people told the Independent Care Review they preferred. However, we recognise that some may prefer to use 'siblings' as a term which is inclusive and not gender specific. When using the CLAS data we also refer to males/females only as this is the way gender is recorded.

What would you like to see in Phase 3?

How are we supporting transitions?

Data explained - why less than 50% interacting with birth parents etc. This data is open to interpretation.

If young people reconnect with birth families how was this supported in short and long term

Pathway planning

Adoption and permanence breakdowns What happens when adoption and permanence breaks down?

Educational outcomes; access to Life Story work; what impacted on likelihood of young people reconnecting with birth families; has the 'feeling' of permanence been disrupted or cemented over time even if the legal status hasn't changed

Can the research team look at comparative outcomes for different care settings? ie. kinship care, adoption, foster care, S25 etc

Is it possible to ask the children/young people in phase 3 - looking back, how important was it to be involved in research?

Emotional wellbeing outcomes and access to services

Early decisions really matter instability impact quality of relationships throughout life

More survey data from birth family members

What steps do we take to really understand the nature of brother/sister relationships and what more do we need to do

Greater focus on having evidence based interventions

More focus on where permanency is done well

For the research What happens in adulthood - is there a difference in "outcomes" for children who did achieve legal permanence and those who didn't? Is there a difference for children who had felt permanence and those who didn't?

Improve decision making in children's hearings especially in relation to consistent decision making for contact where sibling groups are separated

For practice How can we support the workforce to move beyond only firefighting and into a balance between firefighting and ongoing support? (Can we give the workforce more support? Resources? Time and capacity?)

Build in attainment data to the admin data analysis? Are different pathways/routes to permanence associated with different attainment outcomes?

Can we explore what's negative about s25 for children. Today you said there are lots of negatives for children who choose to remain on a voluntary order. Are these negatives perceived by adults or expressed by children ?

Brothers and sisters Any evidence of relationships being re-established after long separations/no keeping in touch?

Evolution of methodology to include participative action research baked into the design and possibly conduct of phase 3

In a multi placement family, how the hearing system navigate each children's plan, without it impacting on other plans. I.e 1 out of 4 children having an order in their CSO of sibling contact monthly. Taking into account 1 child's views without understanding the impact on others

Data linkage Any chance of linking with health data?

Incorporation of findings from Advisery Group on use of S25 in Scotland.

Complexities for foster carers with multiple children from different families

A look at the impact of changes in social worker, support workers, teachers etc.

Further understand the differences in outcomes (physical & mental health, education etc) between children in LAC pathways and the general population.

How many children living with foster carers have been matched with foster carers approved for permanence? (rather than continuing on a long term basis.)

Understand the risks and confounders to achieving permanence.

More about how the kinship carers understand their liminal space between family and state. How foster carers understand their role and impact following a child's life span. How they are supported with breakdown of placement and any relationship repair work. What factors have been key to supporting kinship placement - outcomes for young people?

Thinking about how we can give workers time with carers to see the bigger picture and maintain healthy family time so that we can support children to have their family network as they transition into adulthood

Children's Hearing system and impact on permanence planning

To understand better what is driving the lack of contact with brothers + sisters. How do children feel about this?

The problem is enduring. How does the system specifically perpetuate resistance to change?

Discuss level and type of support from the agency I work with. Do more lifestory work.

Key focus on influencing policy. Promise implementation - is this making a difference to the lives of children. Key-relationships. Having own family

What next for the research? Children's/ young people's views on what they think could have been done differently? What do they think would have made a positive difference? More of - encouraging contact following permanence. Reminder of early decisions improve children's outcomes. Remember they are all children.

Focus on transitions and impact of continuing care.

Have we got better at supporting sibling relationships?

More from birth dads - often missing from children's stories

Something around the impact of policy/ ethos changes on children whose plans were made a long time ago eg impact of the promise.

How many of the birth parents involved have had further children removed?