Infants born into care of local authorities in Scotland: working together with the data

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The policy and legal contexts in Scotland

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Policy context in Scotland

• Getting it right for every child (girfec) - multi-agency co-operation, prevention and early support for children and families to improve children’s wellbeing

• Child protection embedded within girfec - holistic assessment of child’s needs not just safety needs in formation of child’s plan

• National Child Protection Guidance 2014 – multi-agency case conferences and local authority registers

• Getting it right for looked after children and young people - to improve the lives of looked after children and young people.

• Report of the Independent Review of the Care system #KeepThePromise
Legal context in Scotland – looked after children

- **Compulsory supervision orders (CSO)** through the Children’s Hearings Tribunals System
  Child can be under supervision at home or placed away from home in foster care, kinship care, residential care, school, secure care.
  Interim CSO – risk to child or risk from child

- **Voluntary arrangements** – child can be accommodated by the local authority with the agreement of parents/person with parental responsibility *(section 25, Children (Scotland) Act 1995) (similar to section 20 Children Act 1989)*

- **Permanence orders** – application to the Court
  Intended for long-term placements and may have ‘authority to adopt’ attached

All children subject to these orders are classified as looked after children

**Child Protection Order** (CPO) emergency child protection
  time limited to 8 days after implementation
Child to be treated as looked after child – so counted in the statistics
Background to data on looked after children

Cecilia Macintyre

ADR Scotland’s Data Acquisition Team in Scottish Government
History of the Looked After Children (LAC) data collection

• Data supplied annually by local authorities
• Aggregate-level collection before 2008/09
• Scope and complexity increased in digital age
• Led to individual-level collection commencing in 2008/09
Content of the collection

- Child’s identifying information – DoB, gender, Child ID are the basics
- Other equalities information if known
- Scottish Candidate Number if available
- Details of care episodes and placements
- Details of legal reasons applying to episodes of care
- Reviewed annually

- Annual publications produced and requests for further analysis
Data developments
Benefit of a longitudinal dataset

• Better meet user need by describing care experience e.g.
  • Of those in care combining multiple episodes
  • Of birth cohorts of young people
  • Depending on initial placement

• Improve data quality

• Enable revisions of time series

• Increase the amount of secondary analyses possible
**An example of madeup clean data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of data collection</th>
<th>Episode start</th>
<th>Placement start</th>
<th>Placement end</th>
<th>Type of placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>28FEB2013</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>28FEB2013</td>
<td>.</td>
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<td>2013/14</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>28FEB2013</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>24APR2011</td>
<td>28FEB2013</td>
<td>27JUL2014</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Longitudinal file contains one episode with two placements
Examples of data issues

• Changes in child characteristics between extracts
• Changes in placement dates
• Last episode marked as open, but not in current extract
• Initial placement removed
ADR Scotland products

Longitudinal dataset 2019:
• Child: 59,507 records
• Episodes: 69,040 records
• Placements: 143,534 records
• Legal reasons: 180,427 records

• Data includes flags to identify issues and guidance provided on how to use

• A guide for users of data
Next steps

• Work with local authorities to scope out resources required to address data quality issues

• Build in feedback from users to improve data in future

• Address linkage issues in collaboration with data controller (currently Social work ID or Scottish candidate number)
Infants born into care in Scotland: Initial findings

Gillian M Raab

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Working together

Welsh report
October 2019

English report
October 2018

Scottish?
Scottish report using LAC-S data

Welsh report
October 2019

English report
October 2018

Scottish report
November 2020

Publication with LAC-E data

Welsh report
October 2019
Cafcass data

English report
October 2018
Cafcass data

Scottish report
November 2020
LAC-S data

Further English report
August 2020
LAC-E data
Rates of becoming looked after under 1 week
Rates of becoming looked after

Under 1 week

Under 1 year Scotland

Under 1 year England
Figure 1 from report
Placements at start of care and at age 5
Figure 6: Percentage of children by location at start of care and on their birthdays from ages 1 to 7.
Legal reasons in first two years of care

Figure 7 Percentage of first legal reasons by weeks from start of care
A few extracts from summary

• Rates of entering care in Scotland under 1 week have increased between 2008 and 2017 – similar to England
• Some, but not all, of this higher rate is due to children in Scotland in care with their parents.
• Episodes of care are shorter for those returning home to their parents but longer and more complex for those being adopted.
• Young children and their parents often have many complex interactions with children’s hearings
Thank you

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