

Introduction to Research Viva

Lecturer: Barbara Chinyani

Student Name: Saray Crego Perez

Student Number: 1916155

Literature Review Focus

Summary: This literature review is about looked after children, the strengths and weaknesses of the system in place and the role the practitioners within the care sector and their relationships with the children in their care.

A child that has been in the charge of a local authority for more than 24 hours can be defined as a looked after child. Looked after children come from a very wide set of backgrounds and all have different accounts and experiences in care. Children enter care for a variety of reasons, but the majority of them come from being subjected to abuse or neglect.

The Children And Young Persons Act 2008 was passed to ensure children in care receive the highest care and access to services focused on their individual needs.

The importance of this research is to analyse the quality of the current provision of services, gaps in the system, and the impact these have on the children's livelihood and well-being.

Research Question: Are all the looked after children's physical and mental health needs met and accounted for?

Aim: the aim is to explore and analyse policies and practices in place and the current provision of service

Objectives: To research, explore and analyse current legislation, policy and provision of the UK system for looked after children, environmental and socioeconomic factors, relationships between carers and children, and the impact these have on the children's physical and mental subjective well-being.

Methods

A secondary research and a systematic literature review of 15 articles on looked after children, safeguarding, subjective wellbeing and childhood adversity in care.

Keywords: Looked After Children, Children In Foster Care, Subjective Well-being, Out-of-home Care, Mental Health, Physical Health.

Data sources: Journal of Social Welfare, SagePub, The British Psychological Society, NSPCC Learning UK.

Inclusion Criteria: Children Safeguarding, UK based articles and journals, Children in Care, Year 2008 to present.

Exclusion criteria: Adult Safeguarding, Adult Mental Health Care, International Safeguarding Legislation Articles.

Literature Review

Author and title	Research Questions or Research Objectives	Methods and Sample	Evaluation of the Article
Rees, P. (2012).	The article identifies the that children in care experience high rates of psychopathologies, health problems and educational underachievement.	Data collected from the whole population of children in care aged 7–15 years. Measures included the Strength and Difficulties questionnaire, Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention Inventory, and the British Ability Scales. The children's data was contrasted with conventional norms from the general public and current research studies.	Evidence base is limited due to research being heavily restricted in this area. Findings might not accurately represent the wider majority of looked after children.
Ridley, J., Larkins, C., Farrelly, N., Hussein, S., Austerberry, H., Manthorpe, J. and Stanley, N. (2013).	This article explores looked after children's concerns about not being involved in their own care planning and care workers reliability.	Data collected from interviews with 169 children across a 3 year old evaluation program of Independent Social Work Practices	The limitations of this article are the findings from children are obtained via a practitioner instead of the researchers and therefore slightly biased or not accurate.
Simkiss, D. and Jainer, R. (2018).	The article focuses primarily on the statutory health assessments looked after children undergo upon entering the care system in England. Details the ongoing provision ands history of the actual system of health provision and monitoring in England.	NICE (National Health Institute for Health and Care Excellence) Statistics. Data drawn from Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire provided by the Local Authority	Lack of information on the progress made over the last 20 years on the development of the health assessment provision. Data is 15 years old
Wood, M. and Selwyn, J. (2017).	This article explores the abstract concept of well-being as identified by children in care.	Data drawn from 140 children and young people on the subject of their personal views on well-being.	Surveys conducted are used for data collection and not as a tool for improvement. Concepts explored in the article are subjective, therefore lacking on clinical data.

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Findings

Key findings:

- General lack of focus on meeting the individual physical and mental health needs of the children.
- Need for a frequent provision of mental health treatments.
- Lack of stability due to worker's turnover and not taking on board the children's wishes or opinions regarding their care.
- Safeguarding Malpractice Concerns (bullying, discrimination, abuse).
- Research data from interviewed children not obtained in confidence might be biased.
- Healthy attachments must be promoted.

Key themes:

- Findings don't accurately represent the wider majority of looked after children.
- Research is heavily restricted on this area.
- Access to mental health services in this area continues to be an issue.