Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study

The artist is a young person who grew up in care.

“The banner shows many pathways through the care system with a carer or caseworker acting as a guide, ultimately leading to independence for every young person. Whether we live with family or strangers, study, work, or just try our best, the paths we choose and are guided through in our youth are what we use to prepare ourselves for the happiest adulthood we can achieve” Billy Black

Service use and support for children and carers in OOHC

Australian Social Policy Conference September 2017
Ilan Katz and Christine Eastman
Paper aims

Service Use and Support in the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS)

• To explore service provision and support for child and carer.

• Presentation focuses on 3 types of support:
  – Informal support
  – Caseworker support
  – Services (e.g., health, counselling, child care)

❖ Paper is based on analysis of Waves 1 and 2 of the POCLS
• Other than the actual provision of care, service provision is the most important component of the care experience supporting the child’s wellbeing and improved outcomes.

• A very wide range of services are provided to children in OOHC and their carers.

• In addition carers receive informal support from family, friends and neighbours.

• The caseworker is a key component of the service provision to children in OOHC and their carers.
Evidence base

• The research literature confirms that children in OOHC have very high needs for services, particularly in terms of their health, socio-emotional wellbeing and educational wellbeing.

• Children in OOHC benefit from health and education plans, which benefit from good partnership working between caseworkers, carers, children and relevant workers.

• There is no previous literature which relates children’s needs to the provision of services, although research does indicate that many health and cognitive issues are not picked up.

• There is also very limited research on the impact of casework on children and carers, in terms of their access to services or their outcomes.
### Respondent numbers: study child service analysis

#### Cultural background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 survey respondents</th>
<th>W1 and W2 survey respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural background</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Australian/unspecified</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Placement type (at wave one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 survey respondents</th>
<th>W1 and W2 survey respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement type (at wave one)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative/Kinship Care</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Care</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, FACS Admin data linked to survey data
Support for children and young people
Issues/needs definition

• Cannot directly measure service need so proxy measures have been used – referred here as issues/needs
• May indicate a need for service
• Combination of carer-reported issues and standardised test measures
• Proxy measures used to measure need for services as at wave 1 (full details available from presenters):
  • Any socio-emotional development issue above relevant cut-off
  • Any cognitive issue above relevant cut-off
  • Any physical development issue above relevant cut-off (children aged under 60 months)
  • Any long-term (6+ months) health condition (carer reported) – split between psychological and physical/other
• Numbers may differ due to definitions used by other researchers
Percentage of children & young people with issues/needs at Wave 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue/need</th>
<th>9-35 months</th>
<th>3-5 years</th>
<th>6-11 years</th>
<th>12-17 years</th>
<th>All ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-emotional issue</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive issue</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical development issue</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term health condition - psychological</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term health condition - physical/other</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>567%</td>
<td>265%</td>
<td>329%</td>
<td>124%</td>
<td>1285%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%
Number of issues/needs amongst children & young people in care at Wave 1

Age at wave 1

- 9-35 months
  - 0 issues/needs: 20%
  - 1 issue/need: 28%
  - 2+ issues/needs: 52%

- 3-5 years
  - 0 issues/needs: 27%
  - 1 issue/need: 28%
  - 2+ issues/needs: 45%

- 6-11 years
  - 0 issues/needs: 23%
  - 1 issue/need: 36%
  - 2+ issues/needs: 42%

- 12-17 years
  - 0 issues/needs: 20%
  - 1 issue/need: 29%
  - 2+ issues/needs: 51%

- All ages
  - 0 issues/needs: 22%
  - 1 issue/need: 30%
  - 2+ issues/needs: 48%

Percentage within age group

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%
Mean number of issues/needs at Wave 1 and Wave 2

![Graph showing the mean number of issues/needs at Wave 1 and Wave 2 for different age groups.]

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Change in carer rating of child & young person overall health, Wave 1 to Wave 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at wave 1</th>
<th>Deterioration</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-35 mths</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11 years</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17 years</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage within age group

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%
Carer-reported health & allied services use among children & young people, Wave 1 & Wave 2

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Support for Carers
Respondent numbers (carers) with two waves of responses

### Cultural background of carer 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural background of carer 1</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Australian/unspecified</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Placement type (at wave one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement type (at wave one)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative/Kinship Care</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Care*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Residential care not analysed separately due to small numbers but included in analysis of all respondents where appropriate

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Average carer satisfaction with caseworker & associated agencies across Waves 1 and 2

Combines:
- Ability with being able to reach caseworkers when needed
- Assistance from caseworkers
- Working relationship with other agencies related to the study child

Placement type at wave 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative/Kinship Care</th>
<th>Foster Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Mean satisfaction with caseworker across wave 1 and wave 2

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Average contact frequency with caseworker across Waves 1 and 2

Combines:
- Frequency of face-to-face contact with caseworker
- Frequency of phone or email contact with caseworker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Foster Care</th>
<th>Relative/Kinship Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than monthly</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%
Type of informal support accessed by carer across Waves 1 and 2

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Average number of informal support types used by carers across Waves 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Type</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative/kinship care</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean: Foster = 3.8
Relative/kinship = 2.9

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%
Professional services and supports used by carers across Waves 1 and 2

- Child care/ before/after school care
- Respite care
- Carer support orgs and groups
- Transport
- Carer support teams
- Counselling/ psychologist services
- Foster carer advisory groups
- After hours and crisis support
- Financial advice
- Interpreters

Percentage of carers reporting use in either wave

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Average number of professional services used by carers across Waves 1 and 2

Average number of services accessed by carers (yes/no) across waves 1 and 2

Foster  Relative/Kinship Care

Percent of carers

0  27%  9%
1  28%  19%
2  22%  13%
3  16%  11%
4  8%  5%
5  3%  2%
6  0%  0%

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6, numbers rounded so may not add to 100%
Services desired but not received upon study child being placed, Wave 1

- Contingency money
- Carer allowance payment
- Time/ advice from carer supp wkr
- More info. or docum. about study child/caring
- Time and advice from casewkr/mgr
- Access to a carer support group
- Respite
- More financial help
- Practical assistance with paperwork, legal etc
- Provision of services, courses or training

Percent of carers amongst those reporting a need

- Foster Care (N = 169)
- Relative/Kinship care (N=184)

Data source: Wave 1 and 2 of POCLS carer/CYP survey files V6
Summary

- Children in the POCLS cohort had high levels of issues/needs in physical, socio-emotional and cognitive domains.
- Youngest and oldest age groups showed more issues/needs.
- The wellbeing of most children in the cohort improved between the two waves although some did deteriorate.
- Generally those who had higher numbers of issues/needs accessed more services.
- Service use stayed the same or decreased between the two waves for all services (except dentists). This is likely to be driven by the age of the cohort.
• Kinship carers have less access to caseworkers and are less satisfied with their contact than foster carers

• Kinship carers do not access as much formal support from agencies or informal support from family, friends and community

• Kinship carers also have a much higher rate of desiring but not receiving support from agencies, especially carer attendance payment and time and advice from caseworkers.

• However children in kinship care seem to have equivalent access to services compared to those in foster care.
Questions and comments

- Ilan.katz@unsw.edu.au
- christine@christineeastman.com
Acknowledgements

• **FACS** for the investment in research and leading the POCLS

• **I-view** who collected the data

• **Children and young people** who are participating in the study

• **Carers and birthparents** who are participating in the study

• **FACS district staff, caseworkers, childcare workers and teachers** who assisted with sample recruitment and completed on-line surveys

• **Create Foundation, AbSec and Connecting Carers** for assisting during the study design stage and supporting participants

• **Stakeholders and experts** who have provided support, assistance and advice
Further Information

Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study Team:

Phone: 1800 997 960
Email: Pathways@facs.nsw.com.au

Study DVD, information and publication clearinghouse