Does placement type matter?

This is a longitudinal study that has been following all the 174 children who were in care and under 5 years old on 31st March 2000 in Northern Ireland. It aims to compare how these young people (now aged 18 to 27) get/are on in their different types of placement. It also seeks to explore what other factors help or hinder their life chances and their general well-being.

**WHAT IMPACTS WELLBEING**

**NEGATIVE IMPACT / CHALLENGES**

- **BULLYING**
- **UNEMPLOYMENT**
- **SUICIDE**
- **FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORT**
- **THREATENING**

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

- **PAID WORK**
- **MEANINGFUL HOBBIES**

She (foster mum's) just a great matter in general... The way I see it she basically saved me at a young age, so she did probably be nothing without her, so I would. So she basically took me in. She raised me. I just think she had the patience to start me by I would say it's all down to her, not down to me at all. I pushed every button.

Maeva, 19, lived with her granny and then uncle

Brandon, 19, lived in long-term foster care

**SELF-CONCEPT**

Tennessee Self-Concept Scale

**Meaningful**

**Subjective Wellbeing**

**CONCLUSIONS**

The concept of wellbeing is very complex, and has been defined in a range of ways. According to Dodge et al. (2012), it is about having the psychological, social and physical resources needed to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. Here, the resources we have focused on are some health dimensions, self-concept and life satisfaction, although this study is exploring a range of others (e.g. social support).

Because of the yet small numbers of participants, it is difficult to draw confident conclusions. Most young people in the study are showing good levels of wellbeing (based on these dimensions), but there is a proportion that struggled in the past, with a few (still) struggling now. Placement type does not appear to be the main force behind any differences in wellbeing. While more young people in certain placement types appear to enjoy higher levels of life satisfaction or self-worth (i.e. adoption), the differences are too small. Also, in other respects, some young people in these same placements are showing difficulties, particularly in terms of mental health. A range of challenges are appearing to be tipping the balance of wellbeing. These include bullying, bereavement of close relatives/friends, unemployment, and family rejection. On the other hand, some factors are having a positive impact, including sense of belonging to a family, becoming a parent, support from friends and family, paid work, and therapeutic support.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE**

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