

Institution: University of Strathclyde
Unit of Assessment: 22
Title of case study: Lessons learnt from historical child abuse: Improved policy and practice for children in residential care
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research at Strathclyde has focused on the abuse of children in residential care, both historical and contemporary abuse, and drawn out the implications for improving current policy and practice. These research conclusions have been central in informing local, national and international policy and practice developments, impacting on interventions for adults who have experienced abuse in care, training and education of residential child care professionals, and current residential child care services. This impact has been delivered through the research directly informing the evidence base for the Shaw Review (2007) in Scotland into lessons to be learnt from historical abuse. This Review drew upon the published research alongside commissioned accounts by the Strathclyde researchers to identify actions by the Scottish Government in this area which have been implemented by government since 2008.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Context: Countries around the world are coming to terms with the long-term effects of child abuse in residential care homes. The stigma and silencing effects of asymmetric power relationships involved in the abuse of children in care mean that the historical experiences of adults provide valuable lessons for current policy and practice, in addition to highlighting their own needs as victims and survivors of abuse. The abuse of children in care is one of the most sensitive issues in child welfare policy and practice and has received increasing attention in recent years, with markedly varying responses by governments internationally. Theoretical and empirical research at Strathclyde led by Andrew Kendrick has made connections between historical abuse and contemporary debates. The Strathclyde team has identified the ways in which research in this area is challenged by the lack of clear and consistent definitions and the need to reconstruct experiences and details, often through accounts and reporting by former residents. Kendrick and his colleagues have applied this research to specific policy and practice contexts in Scotland and contributed to recent developments in interventions for adults who have experienced abuse in care as children, broader developments to improve child care services, and the welfare and quality of life of children and young people in care.</p> <p>The research carried out by Kendrick and colleagues on abuse in care has been a central, evidential basis for earlier reviews and government-led inquiries on policy and practice in residential child care in Scotland (Skinner Review, 1992) and on safeguarding children in care (Kent Review, 1997). More recent research at the University of Strathclyde has extended this to include a significant focus on the historical abuse of children in care, as well as contentious, practice issues such as the physical restraint of children in residential child care which have important implications for the safeguarding and protection of children.</p> <p>Key findings: The research at Strathclyde has drawn crucial lessons from historical abuse that have been taken forward in a programme of theoretical and empirical research in order to better safeguard children from abuse in residential care, now and in the future. First, the silencing effect of asymmetrical power relations has meant that those abused felt unable to disclose abuse, and systems to support children to speak about abuse were found to be lacking or ineffective [1, 5]. The research has underlined the importance of listening both to adults who have experienced abuse as children in residential care [5], and to children currently in residential care [1, 4] and recommended the creation of mechanisms to enable both actual and potential abuse to be discussed (such as the provision of complaints systems and advocacy services). Further, the research has highlighted the importance of the relationships between children/young people and staff members, even in the complex and ambivalent context of the physical restraint of children in care [3], and developed theory to better understand the way in which children and young people conceptualise their relationships with family and others, and its importance to residential child care [6]. This underlines the importance of such relationships in creating an open and transparent</p>

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culture to better meet the needs of children and young people.

Underpinning such developments is the need for a residential child care workforce of the highest quality and which demands rigorous procedures in selection and assessment, and on-going training and support [1, 2]. The absence of rigorous selection and assessment of residential child care staff has meant that children and young people have not always been adequately protected. The research identified variability in the use of particular elements of the recruitment process, and recommended better practice and training in recruitment, including the participation of children and young people in the recruitment process. The low levels of professional education and training of residential child care workers have been contributory factors in the negative experiences of children in care [1, 2]. There has been an important need to raise the professional status of the residential child care workforce and an important aspect of this is better training and raising the level of qualifications of residential child care staff members [1, 6].

Key researchers: The research was conducted by A. Kendrick, Professor of Residential Child Care in the School of Applied Social Sciences, University of Strathclyde from 1/09/01; and involved staff of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC), later Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children (CELCIS), L. Steckley Lecturer in Social Work (7/07/03 to present), and Lecturer M. Hawthorn (3/01/01 to present).

3. References to the research

References 4 and 6 are included in the REF2 submission for UoA22

- [1] Sen, R., Kendrick, A., Milligan, I. and Hawthorn, M. (2008) Lessons learnt? Abuse in residential child care in Scotland. *Child & Family Social Work*, 13(4), 411-422.
- [2] Kay, H., Kendrick, A., Davidson, J. and Stevens, I. (2007) Safer recruitment? protecting children, improving practice in residential child care. *Child Abuse Review*, 16(4), 223-236. (submitted to RAE 2008)
- [3] Steckley, L. & Kendrick, A. (2008) Physical restraint in residential child care: the experiences of young people and residential workers. *Childhood*, 15(4), 552-569.
- [4] Kendrick, A., Steckley, L. & Lerpiniere, J. (2008) Ethical issues, research and vulnerability: gaining the views of children and young people in residential care, *Children's Geographies*, 6(1), 79-93
- [5] Kendrick, A & Hawthorn, M. (2012) *National Confidential Forum for Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse in Care: Scoping Project on Children in Care in Scotland, 1930 – 2005*.
- [6] Kendrick, A. (2013) Relations, relationships and relatedness: Residential care and the family metaphor. *Child & Family Social Work*, 18(1), 77-86.

Notes on quality:

All the research has either been published in peer-reviewed international, academic journals, or has been commissioned specifically to address issues of historical abuse. Reference 1 is based on the research commissioned as part of the Shaw Review by Scottish Government, and published in a leading international journal. Reference 2 was commissioned by Scottish Government and published in a leading child protection journal. Reference 3 was funded by Save the Children and published in a leading European journal. Reference 4 drew on a number of research studies and was an invited paper in a special issue on ethics. Reference 5 was commissioned by Scottish Government to contribute to the development of the National Confidential Forum in Scotland. Reference 6 draws on a range of Kendrick's research and was an invited paper in a special issue on relationships.

4. Details of the impact

Process from research to impact:

Recognition of the Strathclyde research's conclusions in relation to the complex issues of historical abuse, its consequences in terms of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect, programme

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abuse, and systems abuse, and the importance of applying the lessons learnt to current policy and practice in residential child care was a central component of the Shaw Review in 2007. This review, chaired by Tom Shaw, was set up by the Scottish Government with an explicit remit to examine historical abuse in residential child care, the systems of laws, rules and regulations and their implementation and compliance, and their connections with historical abuse (1950-1995).

Kendrick's previous research findings on abuse of children in care - the need for appropriate selection of and training for residential care staff, the need to find ways to communicate about abuse for particularly vulnerable groups of children in residential care, and the gaps in evidence in relation to the monitoring and inspection of services in the past - led to him being commissioned to provide an expert review of the national and international literature on historical abuse as part of the Shaw Review (Source 1). As Shaw has indicated, the Strathclyde research had a direct and material impact on the review: "*The research and advice contributed directly to the findings of the Systemic Review and to the specific recommendations addressing: current provision to inform the welfare and safety of looked after and accommodated children; former residents' needs; and, records*" (Source 2). Shaw's recommendations led to a number of significant developments in policy, practice and legislation in Scotland.

Types of impact: The research carried out at Strathclyde which informed the Shaw Review, and subsequent research, have led to concrete actions and impacts both in relation to interventions to address the needs of adults who have experienced abuse as children in residential care, and in relation to current residential care services, ensuring that the lives of those who have experienced residential care are improved. Through the continuing involvement of the Strathclyde researchers in the process by which policy, practice and services have been developed and improved, the research has had both a direct and indirect impact on improvements in residential child care and the health and well-being of children and young people.

Impacts on public policy, law and services: The Shaw Review's recommendations on current residential care led to the establishment of the National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI) (Source 3) led by SIRCC and underpinned by Strathclyde's research. This led the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to identify five areas of action: care planning; workforce; commissioning; improving learning outcomes; and improving health outcomes (Source 3). A specific impact of NRCCI was the decision by Scottish Government to expand the role of SIRCC to cover all looked after children and to develop a new Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS). To take this forward for all looked after children, SIRCC was replaced by CELCIS. This new Centre is providing greater awareness of child protection and safeguarding children in care, enhanced training, and collaborative working to support those who care for looked after children.

Impacts on practitioners and professional services: One strand of the NRCCI focused on the residential workforce and this is one of the five areas of action. Building on Strathclyde's research, the workforce hub has developed an enhanced qualification for residential workers and supervisors and this is currently awaiting Scottish Government Ministerial approval. CELCIS has also developed up-to-date training materials and launched the *We Can and Must Do Better* website for everyone in Scotland concerned with improving the outcomes for looked after children, care leavers and their families (Source 4).

Health and welfare impacts: Following the Shaw Review, the Scottish Government piloted a confidential committee to hear the experiences of adults who had experienced abuse in care – *Time to be Heard Pilot Forum*. Strathclyde researchers were involved in the evaluation of the pilot (Source 5) and in undertaking a scoping study for a National Confidential Forum. Subsequently, the proposals for the development of the National Confidential Forum were contained within the Victims and Witness (Scotland) Bill published in 2013 (Source 6). Broader conclusions of the research in relation to participation and voice have been addressed through a Human Rights Framework for Historic Abuse in Scotland developed by the Scottish Human Rights Commission (Source 7). This has been taken forward, with the involvement of CELCIS and the Strathclyde researchers, through an *InterAction on Historic Child Abuse* (Source 8) which has brought together

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all key stakeholders: agencies that had historically provided residential or foster care of children, Scottish Government, professionals currently involved in the care of children, faith-based organisations, academics, and, importantly, representatives of survivors of historic abuse. An *Action Plan on Justice for Victims of Historic Abuse of Children in Care* has been circulated widely to relevant organisations in Scotland, for consideration about future commitments.

Reach and Significance: Implementation of the Strathclyde research has resulted in improvements and safeguards not only for those children and young people who are currently being looked after in residential and foster care (approximately 7,000), but also those in other settings such as hospitals, boarding schools, school hostels (a further 5,000). The beneficiaries also include those adults who experienced care as children, particularly survivors/victims of historical abuse. The number of those who experienced care in the past is unclear due to lack of statistics and records, and identifying the number of survivors/victims of abuse is even more problematic due to shame, stigma and lack of evidence. In carrying out a scoping study for the establishment of a National Confidential Forum, the Strathclyde researchers estimated that since 1930 almost half a million children have been in care in Scotland, and over 300,000 of these are still alive today. International estimates for the level of historical abuse of children in care ranges from 3 per cent to 10 per cent.

The impact is also significant for professionals currently working in care settings and in providing services for those who continue to suffer the consequences of abuse throughout their lives. The Strathclyde researchers' work in this area is also currently being used in developments in relation to historical abuse in Finland and the Netherlands. The Professor of Implementation in Youth Care at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences notes that "*research by Professor Andrew Kendrick at the University of Strathclyde has had a direct impact on the development of quality guidelines to prevent for (sexual) child abuse in residential and foster care in The Netherlands. The guidelines were developed by the Dutch employers' organisation in Youth Care and supervised by a special committee of which I am a member*" (Source 9). A Professor of Social Work at the University of Tampere, Finland notes that "*research by Professor Andrew Kendrick at the University of Strathclyde has had a direct and material impact on the plan to study historic abuse in Finland which I have contributed to as a member of the planning group introduced by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health. His work has guided us to suggest a framework of justice and human rights.*"

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Shaw, T. (2007) *Historical Abuse Systemic Review: Residential Schools and Children's Homes in Scotland 1950 to 1995*
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/20104729/27>
2. Statement from the independent Chair, Scottish Government *Historical Abuse Systemic Review*, and, independent chair, Scottish Government *Time to be Heard Pilot Forum*.
3. National Residential Child Care Initiative. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/protecting/lac/residentialcare/NRCCI>
4. We Can and Must Do Better <http://www.wecanandmustdobetter.org/>
5. Time to be Heard Process Evaluation <http://www.survivorscotland.org.uk/time-to-be-heard/process-review/>
6. Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/59133.aspx>
7. Scottish Human Rights Commission - Human Rights Framework for Historic Abuse in Scotland
<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/application/resources/documents/SHRCHumanRightsFrameworkonAAF.pdf>
8. InterAction on Historic Child Abuse in Scotland <http://www.shrcinteraction.org/>
9. Statement from Professor of Implementation in Youth Care, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
10. Statement from Professor of Social Work at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Tampere.