

Children Placed with Relatives and Friends: Placement Patterns and Outcomes

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Placements with relatives or friends are increasingly used by some local authorities as a placement option for children and young people. However, at present, little is known about the issues arising from these placements for the children, their carers, parents, other relatives and for social services.

Study Questions:

The study is funded by the Department of Health and will address a number of aims and objectives. The main objective is to provide a clear picture of the current use of placements with relatives and friends in a range of local authorities in the United Kingdom and the legal and administrative categories used for them, and to examine the factors relating to the success or failure of these placements and whether there are particular circumstances in which these placements are either indicated or contra-indicated.

Sample:

The research will be conducted in four local authorities.

Selection:

Children to be interviewed will be selected from an initial case file study that will identify the current use of these placements within the four local authorities.

Data Collection:

- Case file study of a group of 300 children in relative or friend placements and a group in non-relative placements on a particular date (150 in each group). A range of demographic information will be collected so that a comparison can be made between placements with relatives and friends and those with unrelated carers.
- Fifty interviews will be conducted with children and young people aged five or more.
- Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with the children's carers and parents.
- Standardized measures will be used with the children and their carers.
- Brief telephone interviews will be conducted with children's social workers.

Findings:

The findings of the study will provide detailed information about the benefits and disadvantages of placements with relatives or friends from the perspectives of the main

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participants and will examine which factors relate to the success or failure of these placements. In addition, the placements with relatives or friends will be considered on a range of dimensions, in particular, the progress and outcomes of placements, contact issues, support to the caregivers, placement duration and satisfaction and disruption rates.

For further information about this study please contact:

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