

CELCIS Education Conference 2017

Transcript

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One of the important things we found was that young people who have an unstable experience are likely to have poorer exam results. And we looked at instability in a couple of different ways. So not just instability and care in terms of how often they had moved between their care placements, but also whether they had moved school during their exam years. And what we found was that both of these things were related to GCSE outcomes. So young people who had moved placement a lot during secondary school, or had moved school were at risk of poorer GCSE results. Those who'd experienced both, were at a multiplied risk of poorer results. It was a surprise to find that they were both unique predictors of outcomes. So it might be expected that the reason why changing placements has such an impact on GCSEs, is because you're likely to change school at the same time. But we actually found that regardless of whether they're changing school, a change of placement, had a negative impact on outcomes, and vice versa. What our findings tell us is that for policymakers and practitioners, they need to stop looking at looked after children as one homogenous group and take account of the ways in which individual differences in experiences and characteristics can have an impact on exam outcomes. So, by identifying how young people differ in terms of characteristics, such as the gender, the ethnicity, the reasons why they came into care in the first place, any social or emotional well-being issues that they might have, but also their experiences in terms of the care placements they've had, the number of times they've changed placement, what type of school they attend. By looking at all of these things in combination, you can get an idea first of all of how that might have an impact on their exam outcomes, but also on how you target any support or interventions, so that you don't offer a one size fits all approach and instead you tailor the support to the individual. Another important message is that it's not just about the individual child and the difficulties or challenges they might bring to the situation that is important for their exams. It's also how the care and education systems respond to that child that is important.

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