

EXPLORING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Children who experience out-of-home care are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society



Evidence is needed to quantify the outcomes for children who have been in the WA out-of-home care system and **guide the implementation of out-of-home care reforms.**



To learn more about the life outcomes of children who have experienced out-of-home care, **the Department of Communities commissioned Telethon Kids Institute to conduct a study.**

The study

The study used linked data, **to investigate selected life outcomes for children who have been in care**, and to compare these outcomes with other children.

Linked data from health, education, corrective and child protection services was collected and analysed **for 3 groups of children** born between 1 January 1990 and 30 June 1995:



Data was collected from birth **until 18-23 years** of age (i.e. age at 30 June 2013).

The Care group **included children with wide-ranging periods in care**, from two days up to 18 years:

- 54%** half were in care for **two years** or less
- 53%** half left care **before the age of 13**
- 65%** two-thirds had left care **before turning 15.**

The findings

Overall, **the Care group had poorer outcomes** in most areas of physical health, mental health, education and justice compared to the Maltreatment and Control groups.

Aboriginal children with child protection involvement **were particularly likely to have poor outcomes** in this study.

Selected outcomes



Hospital admission rates were:



2x higher for the Care group than for the Control group



1.5x higher for the Maltreatment group than for the Control group.



Contact with a mental health service as an adult was:



3x more likely for the Care group than for the Control group



2.5x more likely for the Maltreatment group than for the Control group.



Adult **death rates** (18+) were **about 3x higher** for both the Care group and the Maltreatment group than for the Control group.



The Care group was:



2.5x less likely to achieve WACE and **6x less likely to be university bound** than the Control group.

The Maltreatment group was:



2x less likely to achieve WACE and **3.5x less likely to be university bound** than the Control group.



Juvenile and/or adult **community-based sentences** were:



3.5x more likely for the Care group than for the Control group



2x more likely for the Maltreatment group than for the Control group.



Delivery-related hospital admissions were **2x higher** for both the Care and the Maltreatment group than for the Control group.



Of **children born to a mother** who had a period in **out-of-home care**:

40% had a substantiated maltreatment allegation

25% had an out-of-home care placement.

Conclusions

The findings show that **young people who have been in care are at high risk of a range of poor outcomes**, even compared to other children who have experienced adversities.

It is clear that **the challenges** faced by children who experience out-of-home care **are complex and cannot be solved by one sector alone.**