‘Fierce inclusion’ and successful transitions

‘Fierce Inclusion’ and vulnerable young people:
supporting positive transitions from alternative education provision to adult life.

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Focus of this paper

- Background to the study
- Contexts for young people excluded from school and in alternative provision
- ‘Fierce inclusion’; how can it make a difference?
Devolution in Wales 1999

First UK Government to enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in its own legislation

Explicit policy commitment to raising achievement in education/relatively poor PISA scores in 2009
Lawful and unlawful exclusion

Disproportionate rates of exclusion for some groups of young people

Variable provision e.g. access to full curriculum for those excluded from school/in alternative provision

Poor educational outcomes for those excluded and in alternative provision

Inappropriate use of physical intervention and restraint
Methods

- Analysis of publicly available administrative data
- Interviews with key informants (N =16)
- Survey of local authorities (N=21)
- Interviews with children and young people (N=48), their families (N =15) and a range of professionals working to support them (51).
Findings: Exclusion

Rates of permanent exclusion are decreasing but...

- Illegal exclusion still happening
- Reasons given for exclusion problematic
- Some children missing
- Lack of focus on reintegration
- Some groups excluded more than others
- Parents often felt exclusion process was unfair and complex
Findings: Alternative Provision

- Nearly 90% of learners in EOTAS have special needs
- Nearly 70% are entitled to free school meals
- 75% of learners in EOTAS are male
- Provision is variable e.g. curriculum, hours per week, opportunities for success, accommodation,
- Most learners and families we spoke to were happy with the placement
- Use of restraint and physical isolation
- Reintegration rates improving
Who gets excluded from school?

- Male
- Living in poverty
- Age 13-15 years
- Looked after by the local authority
- Have special educational needs/additional support needs
- Have family who have experienced more ill health, trauma and bereavement than the norm
- Of African-Caribbean origin
- School-aged mothers
- Have a low level of educational attainment
- Of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage.
'Cylchdroi' (circle/Turn around) ‘...The name being very deliberately chosen in terms of it being a turn around provision, not a long term provision’.

‘All Our Business’ monthly multi-professional meeting

‘We don’t make any admissions without an exit strategy’

‘two week assessment period... sometimes it is the school that hasn’t had time for breathing space to reflect’
‘Fierce inclusion’ 2

- ‘No wheeler dealer going on.. When I started... the number of deals that would go on where someone would say, ‘Well, I’ll take two of yours if you take this one back’.... That really concerned me because that’s not equality of opportunity’

- ‘Capacity building in schools... we offer clinics, discussion groups... prevention, low level early intervention’

- using data to challenge assumptions e.g. high levels of poverty/ low exclusions and vice versa
Principles and practices

- Strong combination of high expectations with a very systematic approach to student learning
- Systematic approaches to recording student gains and very good regular sharing of this with students
- Strong inter-personal relationships and ethos of care based on mutual trust and respect
- Strong, visible positive leadership
- Welcoming and hospitable accommodation
- Support with access to counseling, psychology services, etc
‘The ethos was vital, it was a deep seated belief that these children could be given the skills they need for adulthood and most importantly, they could be re-engaged with education but also with their aspirations for the future’

‘These are R---- School children. They are ours and we care for them, we will not give up on them, we can put this right together’.
Thank you

Full report:


Briefing paper: http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/creid/Briefings/Briefing29.pdf

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