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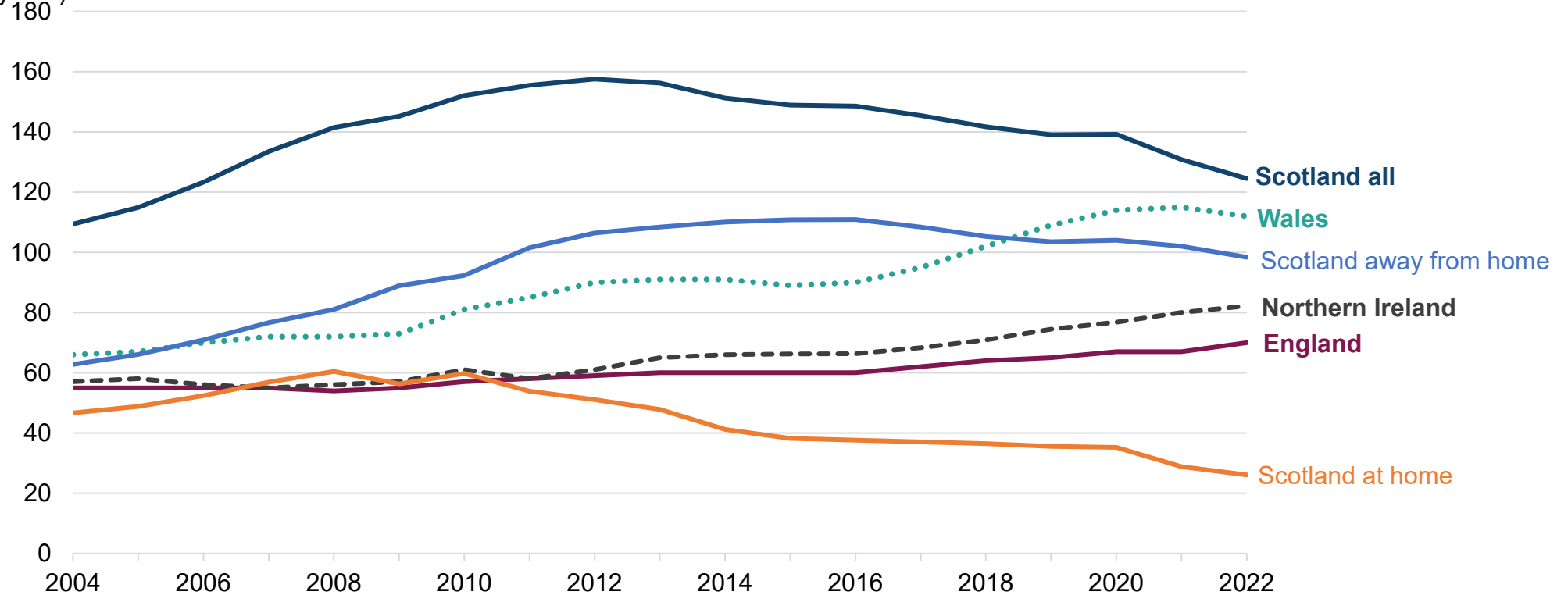
Continuing Care in Scotland: An exploration of implementation

Robert Porter, CELCCIS

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Looked after populations across the UK

Rate per 10,000 children
(0-17 years)



Scottish Context

- Total of c.12,500 children looked after on July 31, 2022 (12 per 1,000) (Scottish Government, 2023)
 - 80% looked after away from home (10 per 1,000)
 - 10% in residential accommodation (2 per 1,000)
 - 6% in Australia
- 255 children and young people entered continuing care in 2021-22
 - 908 were eligible (27% used continuing care)
 - 39% of those in foster care used continuing care
 - 12% of those in kinship care used continuing care
 - 30% of those in residential placements used continuing care
- Large variation in uptake by local authority
- Average age of leaving home in Scotland is c.26, but 17 for looked after young people (Duncalf et al, 2013)

Continuing Care in Scotland

- Established in 2014 by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Provides for young people to remain in their care placement up to the age of 21
 - They were accommodated at the age of 16 in kinship care, foster care, or residential care
- Exemptions:
 - If young person accommodated in secure care immediately before ceasing to be looked after
 - If carer/provider has indicated they are unwilling/unable to provide the placement
 - Local authority considers that providing the care would significantly adversely affect the welfare of the young person

Our study of Implementation (2022)

Conducted in 2021-2022 in order to assess how Continuing Care provisions had been implemented across Scotland. We found that...

1. Continuing Care not implemented consistently between, or even within, local authorities
2. Examples of excellent practice - working to keep young people in their homes, and promote established relationships
3. Examples of poor practice, which does not meet legal obligations under the 2014 Act.
4. Little guidance, support, or standards in relation to implementation

Cautionary Tales – Challenges to Implementation

- Lack of clarity of legislation & guidance leading to negative outcomes
- Expectations of lowered care provision
 - And lower fees being paid
- Challenges to professional practice
 - How to support carers to retain relationships?
- Capacity
 - Lack of physical space
 - Need for those seen as having 'greater need'
 - Particular problem for residential care
- Expectations
 - Of the system, young people, carers.... That young people leave care at 16

Good news – What worked in Scotland

- Clear guidance & legislation
 - Responding to bottle-necks identified (e.g. registration of residential homes in Scotland)
- Leadership
 - Organisational support to allow practitioners to behave differently – admin, time allocation, travel
- Discussing it early & often
 - Not initially at formal reviews, but in daily conversations
- Setting an example
 - When one young person stays, it becomes an incentive/demonstration for others

Get ahead of us – Tips to get further, faster

- Get *everyone* on board!
 - Group Commitment & Responsibility
- Resource planning!
 - Physical – Where will young people be staying?
 - Human – Who will support them?
 - Financial – how will local authorities pay for it?
- Relational stability is as important as physical
 - Planning to allow carers to remain in a young person's life
 - The objective is *interdependence*
- Make staying in placement the 'norm'
 - Expectations are a huge influence on young people, carers & other professionals

References

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