

Institution: The Open University

Unit of Assessment: C22 Social Work and Social Policy

Title of case study: Making a difference for children in Scotland and Wales

1. Summary of the impact

1. Between 2006–10 Open University (OU) researchers Aldgate and Rose worked with the Scottish government to develop a rights and research-based national framework, *Getting it Right for Every Child*. Significant parts of this framework have now been included in the *Children and Young People Bill* (2013), to become law in 2014. Aldgate's research into kinship care led to the introduction, in 2010, of allowances for children who are looked after within the kinship care system.
2. Rose also worked with the Welsh government to develop and implement a national framework for learning and reviewing child protection policy and practice. Statutory regulations were laid and statutory guidance was issued for their implementation from 1 January 2013.

These developments have attracted international interest.

2. Underpinning research

Contributors: Jane Aldgate (Professor of Social Work, The Open University, 1999–2010); Wendy Rose (Senior Research Fellow, The Open University, 1999–2010); Miranda McIntosh (Research Fellow, Social Work Inspection Agency, 2005–06); Julie Barnes (Independent Research and Development Consultant, until 2008)

1. The work in Scotland built upon research previously carried out by Rose and Aldgate, in England, on the *Framework for Assessing Children in Need and their Families*. This featured a new, multi-disciplinary and ecological approach to child development (Aldgate 2005). This was incorporated into the theory and practice base of the *Getting it Right for Every Child* model, alongside a strong commitment to the rights based approach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as explored by Aldgate (Scottish Government, 2013).
2. Aldgate also undertook empirical studies as part of a review of the government's services for looked-after children. The first was a qualitative study of twenty four children, exploring their perspectives on their well-being. It was the first such study in Scotland (Aldgate and McIntosh, 2006a).
3. The second was a mixed methods study of children who have been formally looked after in kinship care. This was the first government study on kinship care in Scotland and provided the first national survey on policy and practice amongst the country's local authorities. The study looked both at children's experiences within kinship care and the issues that affected kinship carers (Aldgate and McIntosh, 2006b).
4. Both of these studies extended empirical approaches to involving children in research. They also provided evidence on children's perspectives about their well-being, in order to strengthen the case for a child-centred approach, which became a core principle and component of the national practice model of *Getting It Right for Every Child*.

In Wales, two key pieces of research underpinned Rose's work. The first was an empirical study by Rose and Barnes (2008), involving mixed methods, of the existing system in England and Wales for reviewing child deaths. The findings suggested there were issues to be addressed about the consistency, effectiveness and impact of the reviews, and so posed questions about the system's fitness for purpose. A second study (Rose, 2009), explicitly focused on Wales, was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). This examined documentary evidence of reviews in Wales, comparing them with developments elsewhere in the UK, and involved in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. The findings suggested a high level of consensus about the difficulties being experienced in process and practice and the need for reform. Recommendations were made in the report for a way forward in Wales, which were put to the Deputy Minister for Social Services (Gwenda Thomas) for

consideration and were subsequently approved.

3. References to the research

Aldgate (2005) 'Children, development and ecology' in Aldgate, J., Jones, D., Rose, W. and Jeffery, C (eds) *The Developing World of the Child*, London, Jessica Kingsley.

Aldgate, J. and McIntosh, M. (2006a) *Time Well Spent: A Study of Children's Well-being and Daily Activities*, Edinburgh, Social Work Inspection Agency.

Aldgate, J. and McIntosh, M. (2006b) *Looking After the Family: A Study of Kinship Care in Scotland*, Edinburgh, Social Work Inspection Agency.

Rose, W. (2009) *Improving Practice to Protect Children in Wales: An Examination of the Role of Serious Case Reviews*, Cardiff, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales.

Rose, W. and Barnes, J. (2008) *Improving Safeguarding Practice: Study of Serious Case Reviews 2001–2003*, London, Department for Children, Schools and Families. Also available online at <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-RR022>.

Scottish Government (2013) *UNCRC: The Foundation of Getting it Right for every Child*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government. (Aldgate named as author).

4. Details of the impact

Aldgate and Rose were seconded from the OU and played a major role from 2006–10 in helping the Scottish government to develop and implement the new rights-based, multi-agency framework for all family and children's services, *Getting It Right for Every Child* (Scottish Government 2013). This has been described by the Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram, as 'the golden thread that knits together all our services' (Scottish Government, 2010).

Aldgate and Rose assisted in developing the framework in a Pathfinder in the Highlands region, writing the guide to implementation. The framework and national practice model developed and refined by the Pathfinder were implemented across Scotland from 2008, culminating in national legislation, as part of the Children and Young People Bill. This is designed to consolidate *Getting It Right for Every Child* within legislation and will become law in 2014.

As part of national implementation, Aldgate and Rose led on writing the *Guide to Getting It Right for Every Child* (Scottish Government, 2008), which set out the core components, values and the national practice model itself. The model was explained further in eight practice briefings developed by Aldgate and Rose. Its application to risk assessment within child protection practice was then set out in a paper (Aldgate and Rose, 2008) which informed the National Child Protection Guidance. The early implementation of the framework and practice in the Highlands was evaluated by Stradling, MacNeil and Berry from Edinburgh University (Scottish Government, 2009), who acknowledged the contribution of Aldgate and Rose to its success.

Since then, interest has also been shown by other countries in this radical whole system approach, as well as its underpinning practice model and tools. In Padua, Italy, the Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali has used the framework in a practice guide (*Guida Operativa*) for child welfare workers.

Aldgate's research on kinship care led to kinship care being recognised in its own right by the Scottish Government. The *National Fostering and Kinship Care Strategy*, published in 2006, took up the study's recommendation that government support be central to its development. The ensuing implementation paper confirmed the commitment of the Scottish Government to meet the needs of kinship carers, as recommended. The study's recommendations for kinship carer allowances were implemented in Section 110 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007, which created powers to make provision for such payments. This has been taken forward in Part VIII, regulation 33, of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (see *Guidance on Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009* and The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007) (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/06/01094202/0>).

Regarding the work in Wales, the report based on Rose's study into the role of serious case reviews in the Welsh context argued for a radical overhaul of the system. It has had significant influence on the development of a national policy and practice framework. In her statement to the

Welsh National Assembly on 20 October 2009, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas, welcomed the report and called for specific proposals on how to implement its ideas. In January 2010, Rose was commissioned to develop detailed proposals and guidance building on the study's findings. A whole systems approach to learning in child protection was applied to the model design, underpinned by an agreed set of principles, drawing from evidence of systems of review in different disciplines, adult learning theory, and building on existing good practice and resources available in Wales. The emphasis was on creating a culture of multi-agency learning. The development process, led by Rose, was highly collaborative, with the active engagement of policy officials and professionals from different disciplines across Wales. Following a process of feedback and model refinement, new statutory regulations were laid and statutory guidance issued in December 2012 for national implementation from 1 January 2013 (CSSIW, 2012).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact:

Aldgate, J and Rose, W (2008) *Assessing and managing risk in Getting it Right for every Child*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government, available online at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1141/0123849.pdf>

CSSIW (2012) *Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales Annual Report 2011–2012*, Cardiff, CSSIW.

Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali and Università degli Studi di Padova (2011) *Guida Operativa: Programma di Intervento Per La Prevenzione dell'Istituzionalizzazione*, Padova, Università degli Studi di Padova, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione. See p. 85 for adapted *Getting It Right for Every Child* National Practice Guide.

Scottish Government (2008) *Getting It Right for Every Child*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2009) *Changing Professional Practice and Culture to Get it Right for Every Child: An Evaluation of the Development and Early Implementation Phases of Getting It Right for Every Child in Highland: 2006–09*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government. Evaluation by Bob Stradling, Morag MacNeil and Helen Berry, seconded from University of Edinburgh. Reference to the role of Aldgate and Rose in Highland, pp. 21, 41–3, 92.

Scottish Government (2010), *A Guide To Implementing Getting it Right For Every Child*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2013) *UNCRC: The Foundation of Getting it right for every child*, Edinburgh, Scottish Government (Aldgate named as sole author).

Welsh Government (2012) Ministerial Foreword to Statutory Guidance, *Protecting Children in Wales: Guidance for Arrangements for Multi-Agency Child Practice Reviews*, Cardiff, Welsh Government. Also available online at:
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/safeguard12/?lang=en>

Sources to corroborate the work in Scotland:

Director of Health and Social Care, Highland Council

Head of Better Life Chances Unit, Scottish Government

Former Chair of the Advisory Committee, The Fostering Network (now an Independent Social Work Consultant).

Sources to corroborate the work in Wales:

Former Assistant Chief Inspector, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (now retired)

Head of Safeguarding, Children's Social Services Directorate, Welsh Government.