



Child Welfare
Inequalities Project



Who gets looked after? Inequality and children's services.

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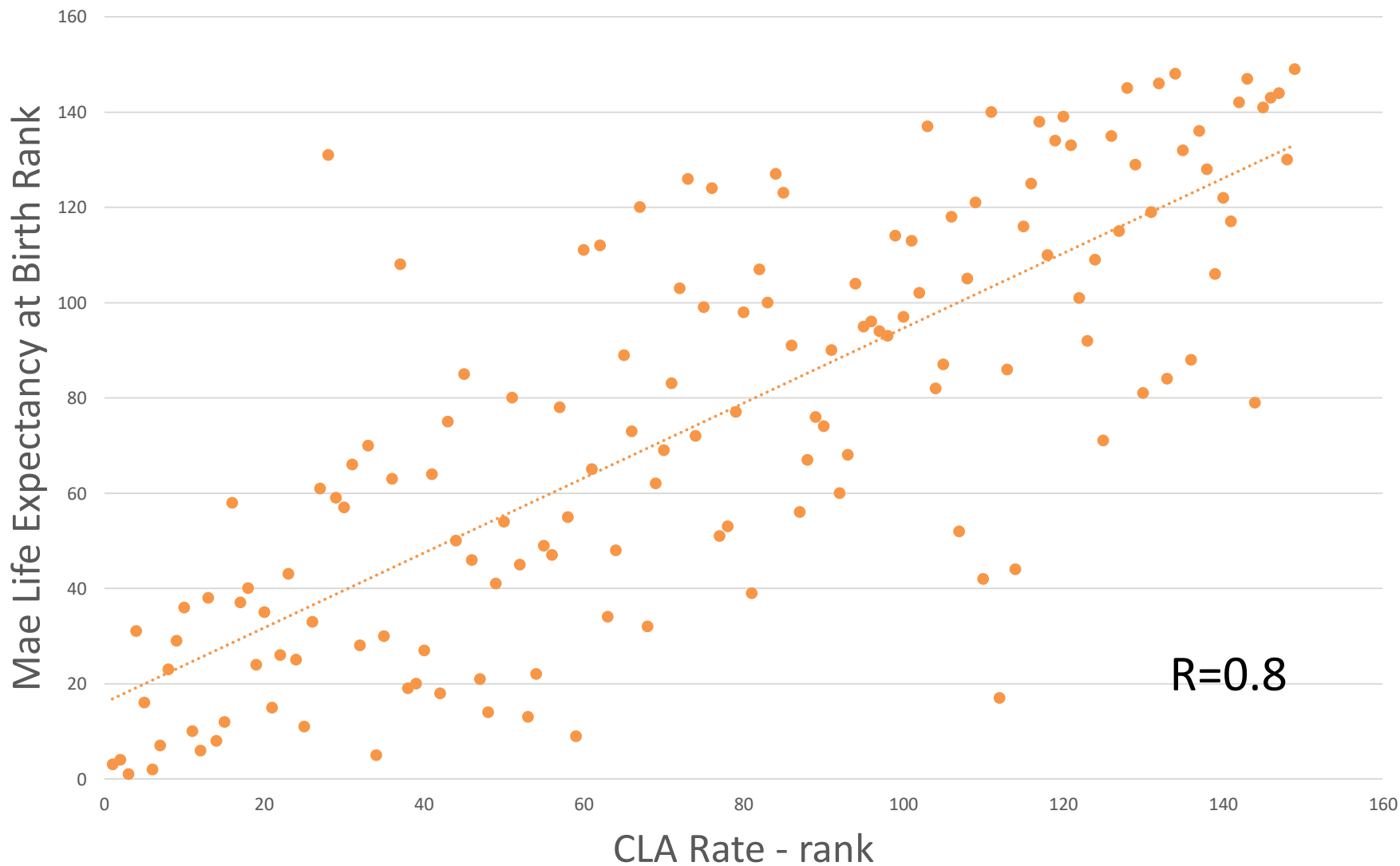
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LA Children Looked After rate by male life expectancy at birth (ranks): low CLA = high Life Expectancy



The Child Welfare Inequalities Projects

www.coventry.ac.uk/CWIP

How unequal are children's chances of abuse and neglect and what are the factors that lie behind those inequalities?

What is the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect?

Are different groups of children affected differently?

Does practice reduce, reflect or reinforce inequalities?

Do deprivation and expenditure influence the quality of children's services?

What can be done to reduce child welfare inequalities?

Drawing on health inequalities

Concepts:

- Social determinants
- Social gradient
- Intersectionality

Methods:

- Use of area deprivation scores as proxy for family circumstances, divided into deciles or quintiles

Child welfare inequalities: definition

Inequity occurs when children and/or their parents face unequal **chances, experiences or outcomes** of involvement with child welfare services that are **systematically associated with structural social disadvantage** and are **unjust and avoidable**.

Why does an inequalities perspective matter?

1. Moral argument: fairness
2. Economic argument: costs and benefits

Why does an inequalities perspective matter?

A focus on social inequality rather than poverty influences:

- how we understand the causes of difficult childhoods
- your aims
- what you do
- how you measure success.

Equality in children's services: a policy goal?

Services Provision: 'By 2020 our ambition is that all vulnerable children, no matter where they live, receive the same high quality of care and support' (p.12) Putting Children First, 2016

Outcomes: for care leavers only.

But not children's life **chances** of referral, assessment or intervention

Policy background

A hostile environment for struggling families:

Demonisation through welfare reform

Withdrawal and decimation of support systems

Attack on sources of social solidarity

Responsibilisation

Intervention rates: a product of demand and supply

DEMAND

- Socio-economic circumstances of families
- Conditions in neighbourhoods
- Community or cultural factors including alternative responses to problems

SUPPLY

- Local priorities, leadership and culture
- Rationing/funding
- National factors – legal system, structures, funding and culture

CWIP: Mixed Methods studies

- Literature review
- Quantitative study
- Case studies of practice
- Family study
- Impact work

CWIP Methods

Quantitative study:

4 nations; 55 LAs (18 in England)

Administrative data on 24,000 children looked after (8000 in England) at 31/3/2015

Collected by different methods in each country

Approximately 12% of all CLA in England; 50% in Scotland, all in Wales and NI to give sufficient sample sizes.

Quants Methods: linked administrative data

1. Child data from individual LAs.

- Demographic data: age, gender, ethnicity
- Service activity data: CPP and CLA including placement type and legal status

2. Index of Deprivation scores for Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs)

3. Population data at LSOA and LA levels

Descriptive analysis: rates and correlations

Multi-level modelling to come.

CWIP Methods

Qualitative studies:

Case studies of practice and decision making in matched areas in 4 English LAs, 2 Scottish LAs and 2 Northern Irish Trusts.

Observation, interviews, focus groups, vignettes, documentary evidence.

Supplemented by analyses of Section 251 funding data, and Ofsted judgements.

Key problem for research: no data about parents

No systematic comprehensive information about the circumstances of parents in contact with children's services:

- demographic patterns
- histories
- current socio-economic circumstances

Child population by deprivation quintile 2015 (%)

	1	2	3	4	5
Hackney	0	0	7	43	50
Hull	1	9	15	18	58
Nottingham	4	3	9	18	66
N. Yorks	29	34	20	10	6
Cambridgeshire	38	24	23	11	3
Windsor	62	16	17	5	0

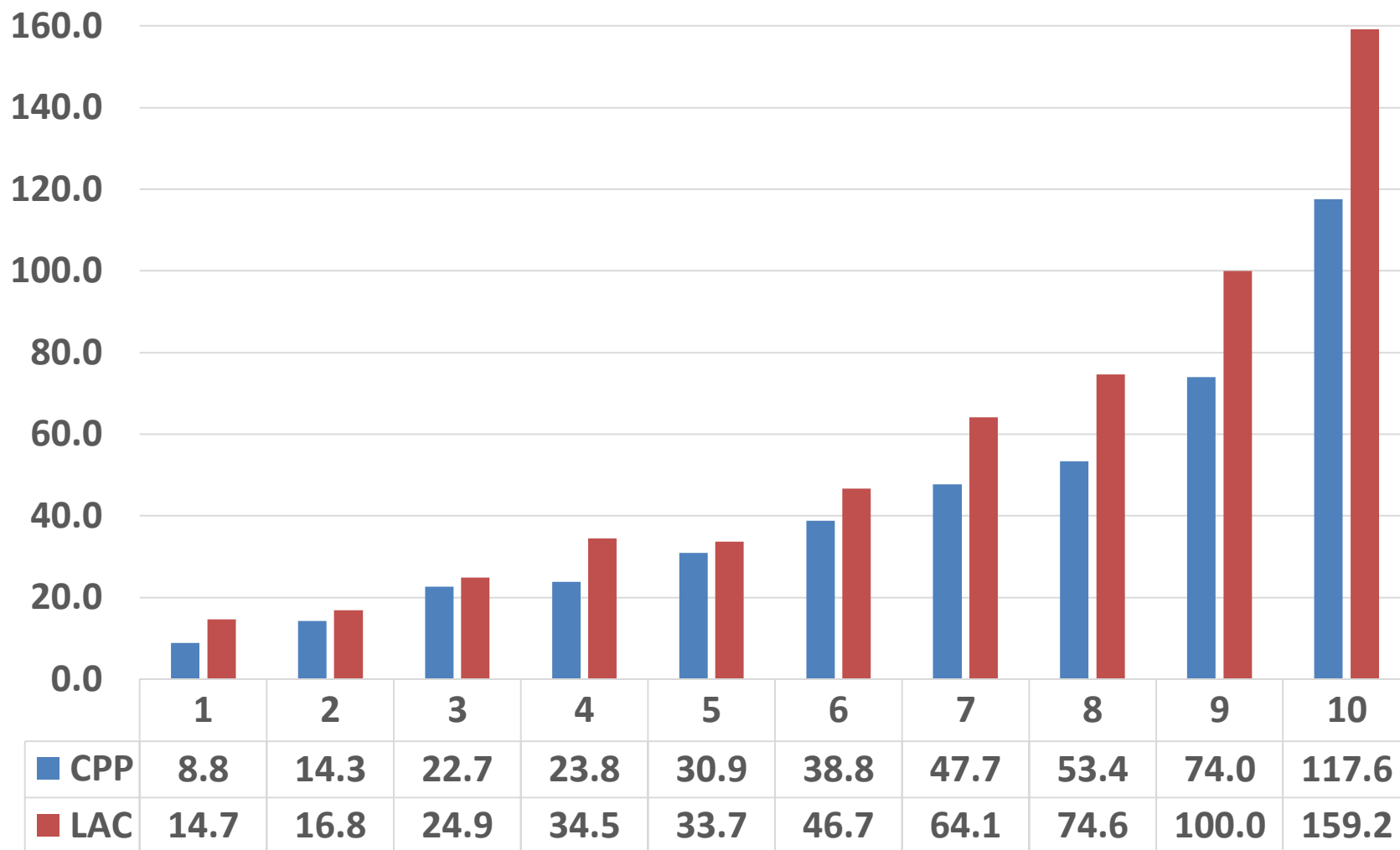
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Key findings 1

Very large inequalities in children's chances of being looked after according to where they live. These primarily reflect family socioeconomic circumstances.

CPP and LAC Rates by Deprivation Decile, England

Sample, England IMD, 2015



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Key findings 2

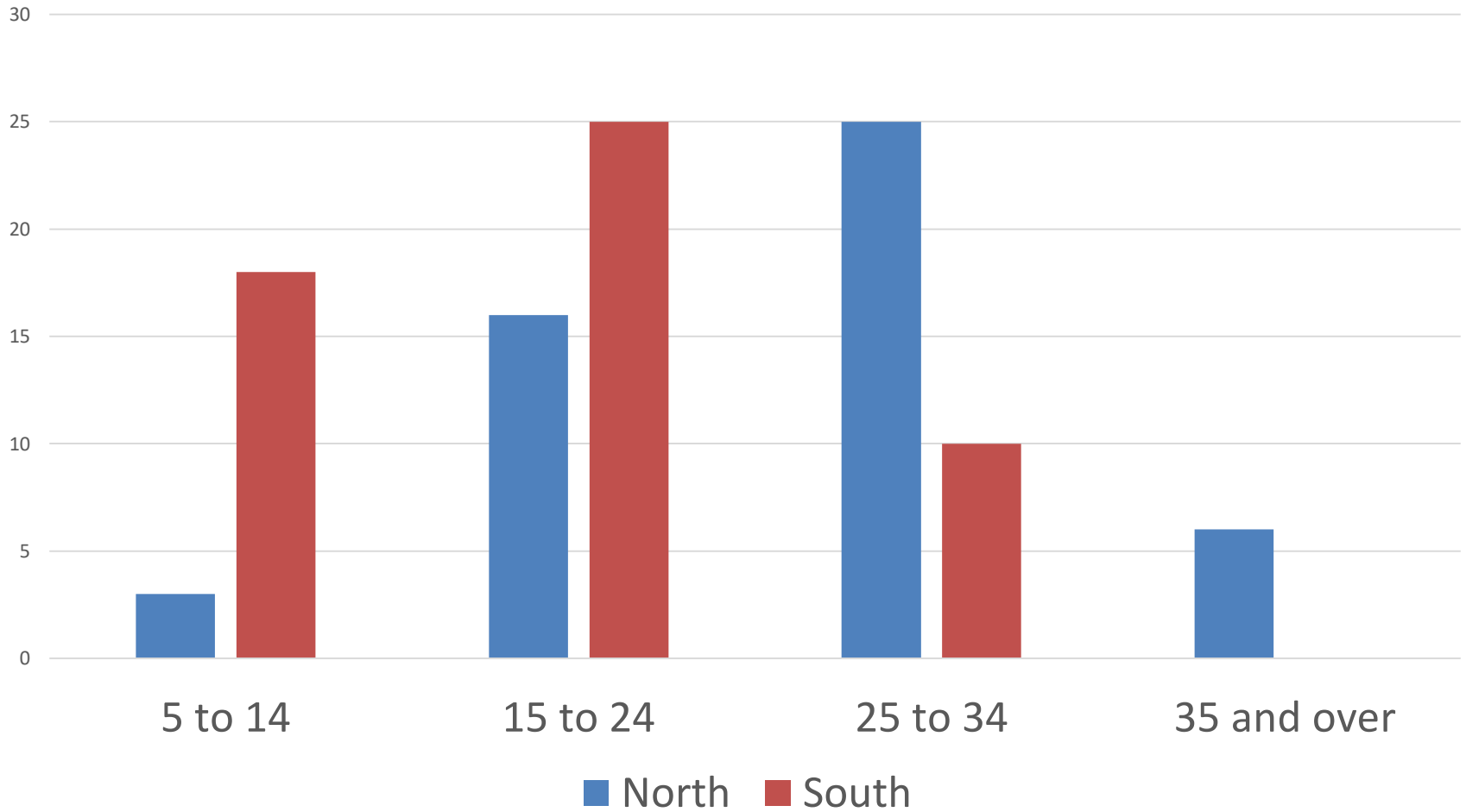
There is a social gradient in children's services intervention rates: each step increase in disadvantage brings an increase in intervention rates.

North South Divide?

2017/18 data

	CLA Rate	Average IMD rank
Midlands	62	72
North	84	96
South	50	49
Inner London	58	108

LA Deprivation Scores in North and South LAs, Excluding London

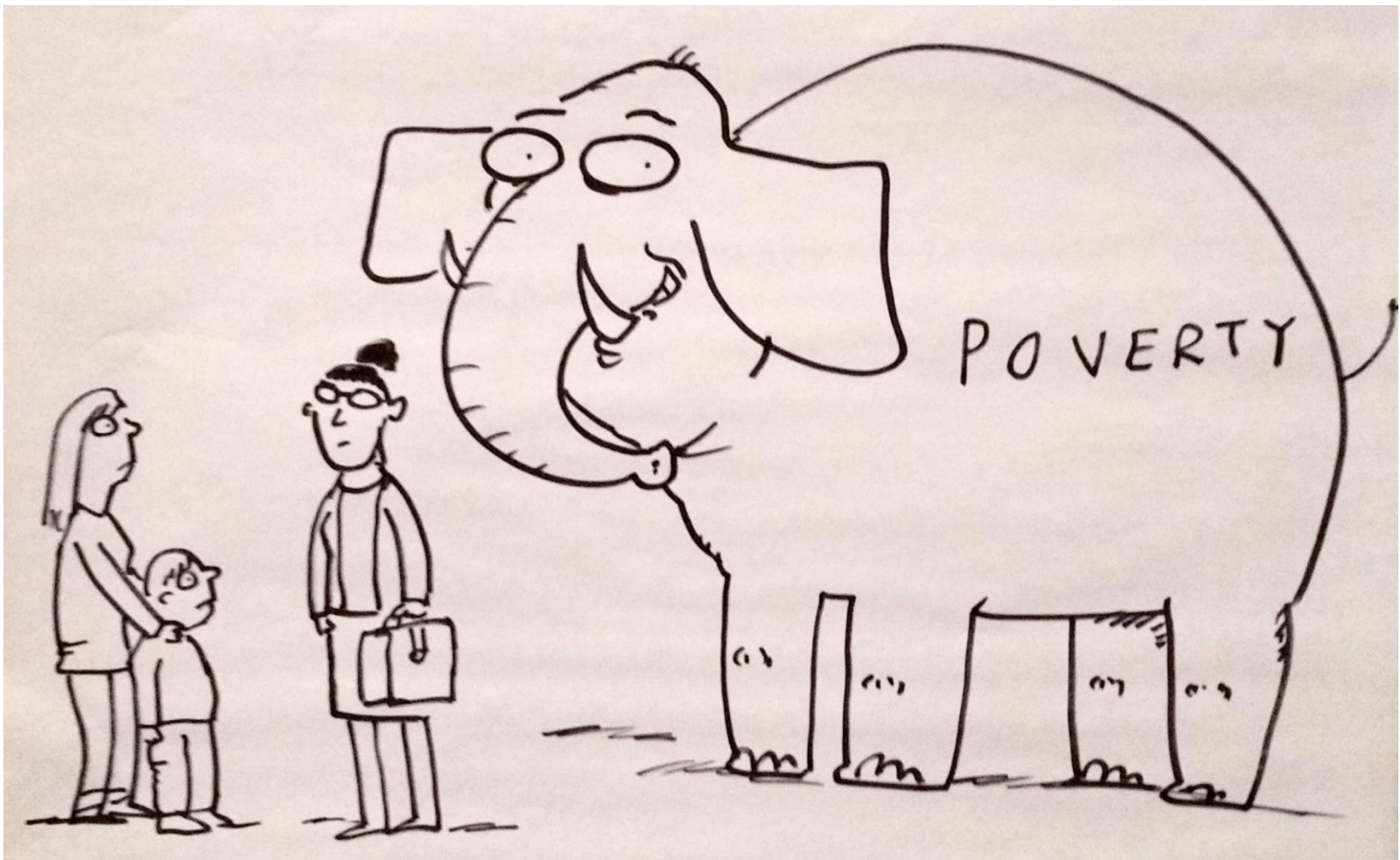


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Key findings 3

Families' socio-economic circumstances affect their capacity to parent effectively directly and indirectly but this dimension is largely absent from practice consideration in England.

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Poverty: absent from assessments, conferences, plans and services. Core business for families (food, heat, housing, debt) is not core business for children's services

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Key findings 4

There are also very large inequalities between ethnic groups but you have to take deprivation into account in order to make sense of these.

Almost no attention is being paid to this important issue.

Ethnicity: % of child population by LA and ethnic category

	White British	Not White British		All Asian	All Black
Newham	10	90		45	24
Brent	14	86		31	26
Tower Hamlets	15	85		63	9
Redbridge	22	78		48	12
Harrow	23	77		43	12
Redcar and Cleveland	97	3		1	0
Northumberland	97	3		1	0
Durham	96	4		1	0
Cumbria	96	4		1	0
St. Helens	96	4		1	0

Ethnicity: Child population (%) by ethnic category and deprivation quintile. CWIP Sample

Sample Population (%)	Deprivation Quintiles: 1 = least deprived					
	1	2	3	4	5	ALL
White British	22	25	17	16	21	100
Asian Indian	16	19	19	21	24	100
Asian Pakistani	8	11	11	24	46	100
Asian Bangladeshi	5	5	9	23	58	100
Black African	4	7	11	22	55	100
Black Caribbean	3	6	14	25	52	100
Black Other	4	8	14	24	50	100
All	19	22	16	18	25	100

Ethnicity: CLA Rates per 10,000 by Ethnic Category, and Deprivation, England, 31/3/2015

	Deprivation quintiles.					
	1	2	3	4	5	ALL
White	15	28	42	77	162	64
Mixed	27	47	62	103	164	99
Asian	7	18	15	21	34	22
Black	12	97	62	96	92	87
Other	46	90	52	41	111	74

Ethnicity: CLA Rates by ethnic category and deprivation quintile, 31/3/2015

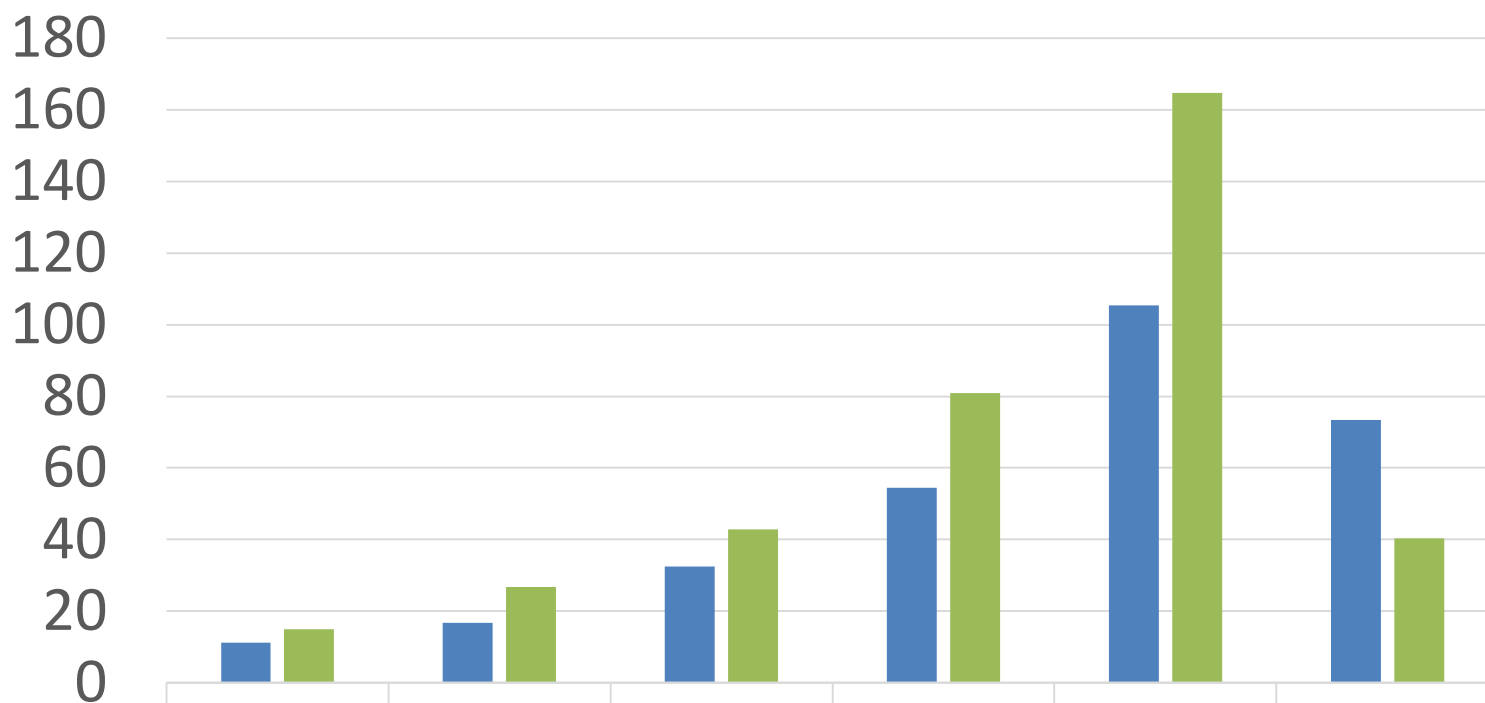
	Deprivation quintiles					
	Lower: 1+2+3		Higher: 4+5		All	
	Rates	N =	Rates	N =	Rates	N =
White British	32	2119	120	4533	64	6653
Asian Indian	2	7	11	24	6	31
Asian Pakistani	20	19	20	45	20	64
Asian Bangladeshi	28	8	48	58	45	66
Asian Other	33	49	51	77	42	126
Black African	67	57	76	222	74	279
Black Caribbean	81	28	144	170	129	198
Black Other	76	30	73	82	74	112
All	30	2317	89	5351	55	7667

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Key findings 5

Very large inequalities also reflect LA level deprivation and expenditure

The Inverse Intervention Law: England CLA rates in high and low deprivation LAs



■ High IMD
■ Low IMD

	1	2	3	4	5	All
High IMD	11	17	32	54	105	73
Low IMD	15	27	43	81	165	40

LA Expenditure

	2010/11	2016/17		2010/11	2016/17	
	20% Lowest Deprivation LAs			20% Highest Deprivation LAs		
	Average Total Expenditure per child (£)		% change	Average Total Expenditure per child (£)		% change
Family support	300	200	-33	600	275	-54
Safeguarding	146	167	14	252	233	-8
Looked After Children	213	268	26	421	423	1
All	658	635	-4	1273	931	-27

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Key findings 6: Very large inter-country differences not explained by deprivation

If England had had Northern Irish rates of Looked After Children living in foster and residential care, controlling for neighbourhood deprivation, there would have been around 40% fewer CLA in England on March 31st 2015.

Key Limitations

- not genuine family economic data but proxy
- dated IMD scores
- dated ethnic population data – 2011 census
- point in time not trends; not in and out
- descriptive analysis – Multi Level Modelling to follow

Implications

- Better data; better measures; better research
- Reducing inequality as a policy goal
- Systemic change: training, practice, processes, Ofsted, funding quantum and allocation, services
- Practice which pays attention to the priorities of families