

educational pathways of young people in care across these five European Union (EU) countries, and to consider ways in which to retain and encourage their participation in education after the compulsory schooling age.

The findings of the project are comprehensive. The study established a baseline of post-compulsory educational participation of young people in care across the five countries. Factors within the education and care systems that facilitated entry and retention of these young people in post-compulsory education were identified for each of the countries. Furthermore, it provided a comparison of national policies and procedures relating to this group as well as other young people considered 'at risk'.

The book consists of 10 chapters, with a chapter dedicated to describing the projects in each individual country. Chapter 1 explains the rationale for the project and how it fits within EU policy on social inclusion, especially with regard to young people. Chapter 2 examines the ways in which the welfare regimes in each country impact on children and young people in care. Chapter 3 details the overall design and methods of the research, including the necessary variations that had been made because of organisational and service differences between countries. Chapters 4 to 8 report on the findings separately for each country. Each chapter provides a brief description of the country, the policy and legislative frameworks of the care and edu-

cation provided for children who live in out-of-home care, and the project itself. These chapters set the backdrop for understanding the findings and their implications for each country.

Chapter 9 examines the similarities and differences between countries with regard to their young people's transition to adulthood, with a focus on their educational pathways and outcomes. It examines how these are influenced by policy, legislation, administrative arrangements and cultural factors. Finally, chapter 10 considers how the aim of the YIPPEE project could be taken forward to enable more young people in care to participate in further and higher education so that they can benefit from education in similar ways to their peers who have their own families to nurture and support them into adulthood.

In essence, the authors discuss how educational opportunities of children in care can be significantly enhanced by improvements in policy and practise in each of the five countries. This discussion provides a guiding structure against which to appraise our own out-of-home care system and develop ways in which to improve the educational opportunities for Australian children in care. As such, it is an essential read for Australian researchers, policy-makers and politicians alike. The book is also useful for all social and community workers and educationalists who are involved in the lives of children in care.

Young People Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care: International Research, Policy and Practise

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Young people transitioning from out-of-home care OOHC explores the most up-to-date research both in Australia and internationally regarding youth leaving the Out of Home Care (OOHC) system. The editors, Philip Mendes and Pamela Snow, are leading experts in this field, between them having co-authored or authored over 200 publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and edited books. They have previously collaborated on leaving care research, with specific foci on youth justice and disability clients as they leave care. The progression to co-editing this book was a natural outcome.

The current volume comprises 20 chapters from 43 contributors internationally, including Australia, Northern Ireland, Germany, UK, Scandinavia, Argentina, Vietnam, South Africa and Eastern Europe. The diversity of contributors and countries allows for detailed international evaluation and comparison. A particular difficulty of embedding and understanding policy research is being able to make

meaningful comparisons of international and local data. This book has managed to bring together a vast array of research so meaningful comparisons and conclusions can be drawn, not least of which suggests that care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group who have poorer outcomes than their peers who were not living within the care system. The one policy reform, however, that seems to make a significant difference to the population is an extension of the care leaving age, or an extension of time during which a young person may remain in their placement to 21 years of age or older.

Young People Transitioning from OOHC is divided into four sections, with part one examining particularly vulnerable groups within an already vulnerable group. This section evaluates current research looking at those young people in the care system who are also in the correctional systems and those with an intellectual or physical disability. Chapter one, The double-bind: Looked after children, care

leavers and criminal justice (Carr & McAlister) explores the data demonstrating that those in care, particularly residential care, are over-represented in the criminal justice system. It examines factors that were associated with arrests – including multiple placements, not having a (living) biological mother and placement in residential care. These ‘risk factors’ may indicate that a higher level of initial and ongoing trauma has an impact both on propensity to criminal behaviours (potentially related to increased impulsivity, fewer pro-social community ties and lack of resources, both emotionally and physically) and on the likelihood of struggling with the process of successfully leaving care. These chapters also offer evaluations of the mechanisms by which the outcomes may be improved for these particularly vulnerable young people, which has significant value for ongoing research and policy development.

Part two explores pathways to educational success and examines some case studies and qualitative research to identify resilience of care leavers and how some become successful. Chapter seven, *Muddling upwards: The unexpected, unpredictable and strange on the path from care to high achievement in Victoria, Australia* (Wilson & Golding) is written by two former care leavers on their experiences of forging a pathway to successful educational attainment. The authors posit that in their cases, success was achieved not because of the OOHC system but in spite of it. Instead, they identified implicit beliefs about the value of education, ‘hopeful thinking’ and some luck in the shape of adults who saw promise in them as being the factors that contributed to success. They also identified systemic reforms that are imperative to the educational success of care leavers, including ongoing and substantial financial support, mentoring and emotional support.

Part three explores policy and practise in different jurisdictions. Much of the volume’s strength lies in this section, with international comparisons made to allow for understanding of international policies and their data around outcomes for care leavers. Particularly notable in this sec-

tion is chapter 11, peer research with young people leaving care: *Reflections from research in England, Northern Ireland and Argentina* (Kelly, Dixon & Incarnato) that explores the relatively new method of research, peer research, that uses individuals from a particular group to plan, interview, conduct research, analyse and distribute data with peers within that group. The theory behind the research method relates to ‘hard to reach’ or marginalised groups feeling more comfortable with one of ‘their own’ and more inclined to participate and feel empowered while doing so. The authors discussed the challenges and successes associated with peer research and the lack of systematic data on whether this method actually enhances data collection.

Part four continues to discuss local and international care leavers and the associated policies, however, provides more in-depth evaluations of specific jurisdictions, rather than broad comparisons. Chapter 18, *Improving institutional care to enhance outcomes for care leavers in Russia* (Stepanova & Hackett) examines the views of caregivers and care leavers in Russia to identify which factors associated with their care experience impacted on their transition from care. The authors outlined a number of factors, including greater focus on attachment and relationship-building, ongoing contact beyond the time leaving care and the need to increase professional training for the carers in institutions.

Young people transitioning from *OOHC* is suitable for those interested in up to date research on leaving care, developing an understanding of methods of qualitative research or working with vulnerable populations. It draws together valuable information on policy and policy development and also evaluation of programmes that have been implemented. It is a valuable addition to the literature on a very vulnerable population that certainly deserves a better standard of care than what they currently receive. This population have had both a more difficult start to life and a fast-tracked propulsion to independence and adulthood without a support network, unlike their peers who are able to live with their families.