

The UK early childhood system

Professor Dr Eva Lloyd

Starting Early Starting Well II

Prague, 5 November 2015



At the start

- Universal and free maternal child health services via National Health Service
- Maternity pay and leave; Paternity pay and leave; shared Parental leave since 2015
- Health Visitor home visits from birth to 5
- From 2015, children's integrated health and education review at 2/2.5 years
- Sure Start Children's Centres
- Multi-professional early intervention services



Early services: impact and pressure points

- *According to Fair Society Healthy Lives (2010), a major review of health inequalities: 'proportionate universalism' has most impact*
- From 2013 Local Government has responsibility for public health, but since 2010 Local Government budgets cut by up to 40%
- Health visitors restrict visits to disadvantaged children after first few weeks
- More than 600 Sure Start Children's Centres in England out of 3507 have closed since 2010



Early childhood education

- Since 1998 UK offers universal, non-compulsory, part-time education for 3 and 4 year old children
- Since 2010 targeted education offer for up to 40% of 2 year olds living with disadvantage, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Early education delivered within mixed market of state schools alongside private-for-profit and not-for profit childcare businesses, including family day care
- September intake in primary school non-compulsory 'reception classes' of children aged 4, since 2011



Early education in 4 UK nations

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Weekly hours	15	10	15	12.5
Time when available	Usually during school year	During school year	Usually during school year	During school year
Start early education	September after 3 rd birthday; September after 2 nd birthday for targeted disadvantaged children			
Location	State nursery classes/schools; primary school reception classes; for-profit and not-for-profit childcare businesses; family day care			
Compulsory school starting age	September after 5 th birthday (4 in practice)	September after 5 th birthday (4 in practice)	September after 5 th birthday (deferral possible)	September after 4 th birthday



Variation between 4 UK nations

- Since 1998 devolved responsibility for universal early childhood education, not for childcare
- Since 2009 devolved responsibility for targeted 2 year old education
- 4 nations decide independently on curriculum, workforce qualifications, inspection regimes and funding levels, but many similarities remain
- In England and Wales Local Government has 'sufficiency' duty for early education and childcare provision



Early childhood education: a commitment to inclusion

According to the Statutory Framework for the *Early Years Foundation Stage* in England (2008, revised 2012; 2014):

“All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability should have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.”

(DCSF, 2008, 10)

Impact and pressure points

- Early education uptake lower among disadvantaged children and outcomes worse
- Differences in quality, adult child ratios and workforce qualifications/conditions between state school-based early education and that delivered within private childcare businesses
- In England take-up of 2 year old free education 42% below target at start of 2015
- 96% of eligible English 2 year olds receive free education in private childcare businesses, not in state schools



The UK childcare system

- UK childcare market model rare in Europe
- For-profit childcare businesses, mostly small, but including stock-market listed (international) chains, play major role in childcare and early education provision
- Childcare affordability challenge, as any state support for parents paid retrospectively
- Levels of state support for childcare costs have decreased since 2010
- Parental childcare fees are payable monthly in advance within the childcare market



Childcare: impact and pressure points

- Nearly 66% British parents receive no employer vouchers or tax credit help with formal childcare costs; tax credit system is in state of flux
- In the last 18 months, costs of part-time 2 year old childcare place increased by 33% while wages remained stagnant
- Fiscal authorities (2011) estimated 20% parents did not receive childcare tax credits they were entitled to during 2009/10
- Childcare access complicated by increasingly irregular parental employment patterns



Children at the margins: SEND in England

- 2008 *Early Years Foundation Stage* programme (revised 2012, 2014) stipulates services should 'support' children with SEND
- 2014 Children & Families Act /SEND Code of Practice: providers must 'have regard to' SEND
- Early education support/funding system for SEND children in state schools differs from that in private childcare sector
- Local Government must assess early *Education, Health and Care* needs, if child may need an EHC plan in school



Children at the margins: Roma in England

- Low uptake of early education by Roma (Gypsy, Traveller and Roma) children
- Additional 2009 guidance to EYFS encourages their inclusion in early childhood provision
- Roma children underachieve in early childhood provision as measured by the *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile*
- Sure Start Children's Centres, Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) teams and NGOs, e.g. Save the Children UK, promote Roma inclusion through outreach programmes

Roma inclusion in early childhood provision: UK context

- UK still lacks National Roma Integration Strategy; only Wales has a Roma Integration Strategy and Framework for Action
- Lack of UK monitoring data on Roma integration
- Significant health inequalities; poor living conditions, accommodation, education and employment; discrimination and social exclusion
- Roma lack of access to local decision making structures affects Roma children's experiences

Summary and conclusions

- Huge increase in provision and uptake of early childhood education and care since 1997
- Access to quality early education/affordable childcare for poor, including Roma, children jeopardized by UK childcare market model
- The right of all children, including children at the margins, to high quality and universal health, social care and early childhood provision is not yet fully realised in practice, despite good policy intentions
- Inclusion has gained a higher profile, but requires better resourcing and more outreach



Contact details

E-mail: e.lloyd@uel.ac.uk

Twitter: @EvaLloyd50

Research Centre: www.uel.ac.uk/icmec/



Sources

- Brown, P., Scullion, L. And Martin, P (2013) *Migrant Roma in the UK: population size and experiences of local authorities and partners*. Salford: University of Salford.
- Brewer, M., Cattan, S., and Crawford, C. (2014) 'State support for early childhood education and care in England'. In Emmerson, C., Johnson, P. and Miller, H. (eds) *IFS Green Budget 2014*. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies.
- Butler, A., with Lugton, D., and Rutter, J. (2014) *Where Next for Childcare? Learning from the last ten years of childcare policy*. London: Family and Childcare Trust.
- DCSF (2008) *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.



DFE (2014) *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. London: Department for Education.

DFE (2015a) *Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England: January 2015*. Statistical First Release 20. June 2015. London: Department for Education.

DFE (2015b) *SEND Code of Practice. Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities*. London: Department for Education. Available from:

HM Parliament (Her Majesty's Parliament) (2014) *Parliamentary Inquiry into Childcare for Disabled Children*. London: HM Parliament.



- HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) (2011) *Working Tax Credit: Take-up of childcare element 2008–09*. London: HM Revenue and Customs.
- Lane, P., Spencer, S. and Jones, A. (2014) *Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by experience. Reviewing UK progress on the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*. Chelmsford and Cambridge: Anglia Ruskin University.
- LaValle, I., Payne, L., Lloyd, E. with Potter, S. (2014) *Review of policies and interventions for low income families with young children*. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner for England.
- Lloyd, E. (2015) 'Early childhood education and care in England under the Coalition Government,' *London Review of Education*, 33 (2), pp. 144-156.



- Lloyd, E. and Penn, H. (eds) (2012) *Childcare markets – Can they deliver an equitable service?* Bristol: The Policy Press in association with the University of Chicago Press.
- Mathers, S., and Smees, R. (2014) *Quality and Inequality: Do three- and four-year-olds in disadvantaged areas experience lower quality early years provision?* London: Nuffield Foundation.
- Moss, P. (2014) 'Early childhood policy in England 1997–2013: Anatomy of a missed opportunity'. *International Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 22 (4), 346–58.
- Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) (2014) *Early Years: The report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2012/13*. London: Ofsted.



National Strategies Early Years (2009) *Building futures – Developing trust. A focus on provision for children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Penn, H. and Lloyd, E. (2014) 'How can government ensure that early childhood care and education is of high quality? A review of the international evidence,' in Wolfe, T. (Ed) *Childcare – Business or profession?* Dublin: Start Strong.

Rutter, J. (2015) *Childcare Cost Survey 2015*. London: Family and Childcare Trust.

Stewart, K., and Obolenskaya, P. (2015) *The Coalition's Record on the Under Fives: Policy, spending and outcomes 2010–2015*. Working Paper 12, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion. London: London School of Economics.



- The Marmot Review (2010) *Fair society, healthy Lives. Strategic review of health inequalities in England post 2010*. London: University College London.
- Wilkin, A., Derrington, C. and Foster, B. (2009) *Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma pupils: literature review*. Research report DCSF-RR077. London: Department of Children, Schools and Families.
- Wilkin, A., Derrington, C., White, R., Martin, K., Foster, B., Kinder, K. and Rutt, S. (2010) *Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma pupils: final report*. Research Report DFE-RR043. London: Department for Education.

