

Measuring what matters: Learning from 20,000 uses of BERRI for children in care in the UK

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WHAT IS BERRI?

BERRI is a digital assessment that helps

Behaviour

Emotional Wellbeing

Relationships

Risk

Indicators (of underlying psychiatric or neurodevelopmental conditions)

Strengths

Domains

HOW BERRI IS DIFFERENT

- Assesses multiple domains in one place
- Includes life events and strengths
- Considers a wide range of risks
- Scores questionnaire and compared child's results to norms
- Provides tailored, clinically-informed interpretations and practical advice
- Tracks change over time

EVIDENCE & SCALE

20,000+ uses with children in care in the UK
200+ data points per assessment Validated and used in several published studies Analysed using group comparisons, longitudinal methods, factor analysis, regression and qualitative research.

THE CHALLENGE

>50%

of children and young people in care have a mental health condition

>75%

of children in care have significant mental health need

Published studies report the prevalence of any mental health disorder in residential settings ranges from 44% - 75% compared to ~13% in the general population

WHAT DOES 20,000 USES OF BERRI TELL US?

CHILD

Better understanding - Better support
Better outcomes

CARERS & PROFESSIONALS

Greater confidence - Clearer formulation
More targeted support

COMMISSIONERS & DECISION-MAKERS

Better matching - Better commissioning
Measurable impact

CARERS & PROFESSIONALS SYSTEM

Knowledge about what works - Benchmarking
Research

SOCIETY

Better life-course outcomes - Ripples to families, communities and future generations

WHAT DOES 20,000 USES OF BERRI TELL US?

1) Children in staffed settings have much higher psychological needs

Distribution of Total BERRI Scores by Setting

Control community (n=643)
Foster care (n=1212)
Staffed settings (n=4329)

Distribution of Total BERRI Scores Across Staffed Settings

Residential care (n=3962)
Supported accommodation (n=252)
Secure (n=115)

2) Lower psychological needs do not always mean lower risks

Difference in Risk Scores by Setting

Mann-Whitney U with Bonferroni correction. **p<0.01 ***p<.001.

	Residential	Supported Accommodation
Mean	184	160
Median	150	126

Residential care had higher Total BERRI scores (greater overall psychological need)

Difference in Total BERRI Scores by Setting

Mann-Whitney U with Bonferroni correction. **p<0.01 ***p<.001.

	Residential	Supported Accommodation
Mean	23	28
Median	13	20

Supported accommodation has significantly greater levels of risk

3) Risk is shaped by the child, context and care environment

THREE LAYERS OF EXPLANATION

CHILD
Age • Gender • Developmental profile

CONTEXT
Recent life events • Relationships
Placement changes

CARE ENVIRONMENT
Provider • Model of care
Level of relational support

RISK

WHAT INFLUENCES RISK? (Multi-level modelling in staffed settings)

Risk to self

- ↑ with more recent life stressors
- ↑ in girls
- Provider accounts for 10% of variability

Harm from external risk?

- ↑ with more recent life stressors
- ↑ with older age (after controlling for other factors)
- ↑ in supported accommodation
- Provider accounts for 30% of variability

Young people in supported accommodation experienced higher levels of harm from external risk, despite lower overall psychological need. Provider makes a substantial difference.

CAN BETTER MEASUREMENT SUPPORT BETTER DECISIONS?

Step-down study: First 160 children moved from staffed care to family-based care

Placement success

Much reduced placement breakdown rates

Change in psychological need

Significant improvement post-move

Economic impact (108x ROI)

Substantial savings (per child and in total)

Better outcomes for children

Stronger stability and wellbeing

When children's needs are understood and addressed, step-down to family-based care can succeed.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PRACTICE?

1 Assess regularly

Risk changes. A single assessment is not enough.

2 Put risk in context

Interpret risk alongside needs, strengths and recent life events.

3 Respond preventively

Routine information can identify emerging risk before harm occurs.

4 Watch for change

Recent stressful events may increase risk - increase vigilance and support.

5 Don't equate 'less care' to less need'

Young people in supported accommodation may need more support to manage elevated risk.

6 Match care to the child

Use assessment to inform placement, provision and progression.

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To learn more about how BERRI
uses our data to improve outcomes
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