

An ESRC Funded Research Study



THE PREVALENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN GROWING UP WITH RELATIVES IN THE UK

BRIEFING PAPER **002**



Characteristics of children living with relatives in Wales

This briefing paper series provides snapshots from the research titled 'Kinship Care Re-visited: Using Census 2011 Microdata to Examine the Extent and Nature of Kinship Care in the UK' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant ES/K008587/1.

This work contains statistical data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which is Crown Copyright. The use of ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce ONS aggregates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the feedback of her mentor, Professor Julie Selwyn and the support from the team at the Virtual Microdata Laboratory at the Office for National Statistics, Titchfield. This research project is being conducted under the auspices of an academic and a stakeholder advisory group. The list of members in the advisory groups and further details of the study can be found on the project website: www.bristolkinshipstudy.co.uk

The responsibility for the analysis, results and the views expressed ultimately rests with the author.

Published by the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, University of Bristol

Copyright ©Dinithi Wijedasa 2017

ISBN- 978-0-9933828-8-8

INTRODUCTION

The background to this study, the aims and the method were described in Briefing Paper 1, published in the autumn of 2015 (1).

This briefing paper, which is the second in a series, provides a brief overview of the characteristics of the children growing up with relatives in Wales. This series of briefing papers is published as part of a study funded by the ESRC to analyse microdata from the 2011 Census in order to provide nationally representative, reliable statistics and maps on the distribution and characteristics of kinship care households in the four countries of the UK.

RESULTS

The prevalence of children living in kinship care in Wales

At the time of the 2011 Census, there were just over 640,000 children (0-17 years) living in Wales.

Of all children in Wales, an estimated 9,560 (1.5%) children were living in kinship care (Table 1). This is marginally higher than the prevalence of kinship care in England (1.4%) [1].

In other words, one in 67 children in Wales were growing up in the care of relatives, compared to one in 74 children growing up in kinship care in England. The prevalence rates of kinship care at local authority level are given in Appendix A.

The kinship child population in Wales grew by 4% between 2001 and 2011.

This is in stark contrast to the overall child population growth rate in Wales where, between 2001 and 2011, the total child population decreased by -4% [2].

Table 1. Estimates of children living in kinship care in 2001 and 2011 in Wales

	Number of children in kinship care	Prevalence of kinship care (%)
2001	9,200	1.3%
2011	9,560	1.5%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata
2001 estimates from Nandy et al., 2011 (3)

Gender of children in kinship care in Wales

In Wales, there were slightly more male children (54% of kinship child population) living in kinship care.

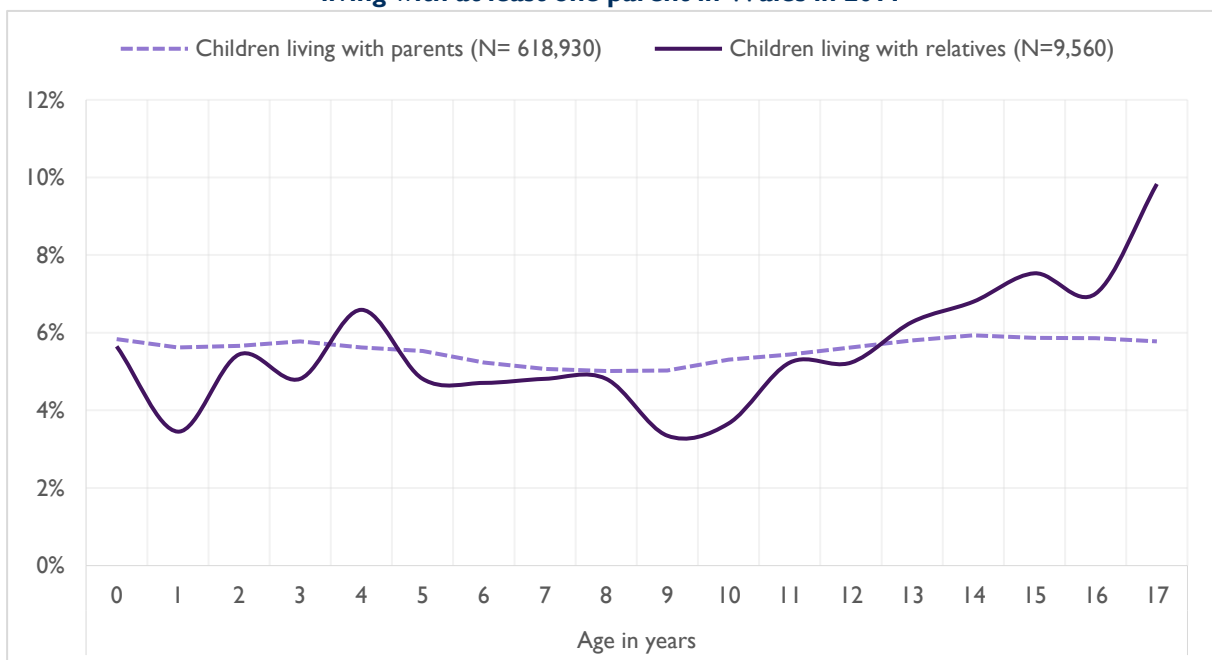
The gender distribution of children in kinship care was slightly different to that of the total child population in Wales, where 51% of the children were male.

The age distribution of children in kinship care in Wales

The age distribution of children in kinship care, compared with those living with at least one parent is shown in Figure 1.

There were proportionately more (52%) 10-17 year old children in kinship care in 2011 compared to the 46% of children between the ages of 10-17 years living with parents.

Figure 1. The estimated age distribution of children living in kinship care compared with children living with at least one parent in Wales in 2011



The prevalence and population growth of kinship care in Wales by age

The numbers, prevalence and kinship child population growth rates by age group, between 2001 and 2011, are shown in Table 2.

Compared with the number of children in kinship care in 2001, by 2011, the number of children in kinship care who were 0-4 years of age had grown by 11%, whilst the number of children who were 15-17 years of age had grown by 34%. The number of children aged 5-14 years in kinship care decreased over the same period. A similar pattern was seen in the England kinship child populations.

Table 2. Estimates of children in kinship care by children's age in Wales in 2001 and 2011

Age group	Number of children in kinship care (2001)	Number of children in kinship care (2011)	Prevalence rate (2001)	Prevalence rate (2011)	Kinship child population growth rate (2001-2011)
0 - 4 years	2,233	2,480	1.3%	1.3%	11%
5 - 9 years	2,400	2,150	1.3%	1.5%	-10%
10 - 14 years	2,833	2,600	1.4%	2.1%	-8%
15 - 17 years	1,733	2,330	1.5%	1.5%	34%
Total (Wales)	9,199	9,560	1.4%	1.5%	4%

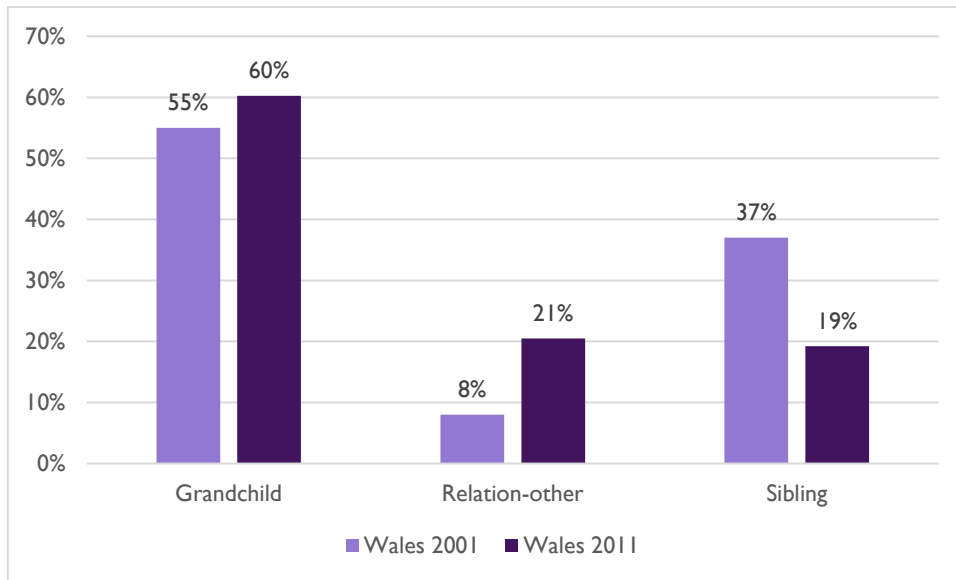
Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata, 2001 estimates from Nandy et al., 2011(3)

Children's relationship to the head of the household

Most (60%) of the children growing up in kinship care were living in households headed by a grandparent, whilst 19% were living in households headed by a sibling. The other 21% of the children were in households headed by another relative such as an aunt, an uncle or a cousin. The same pattern of distribution was seen in England.

When compared with the households in 2001, the proportion of grandparent-headed kinship households has increased, whilst the proportion of sibling-headed households has decreased (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Estimates of children’s relationship to their kin carers in Wales in 2001 (N=9,199) and 2011 (N= 9,560)



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata, 2001 estimates from Nandy et al., 2011 (3)

Note on the kinship children's relationship to the head of the household

It was not possible to ascertain whether the household reference persons were the children’s primary carers from the Census data. Therefore, it is possible that in some households, persons other than the household reference person were the child’s primary caregiver. There may be grandparent-headed households where a sibling is the primary carer and also sibling-headed households where a grandparent or other relative is the primary caregiver.

Prevalence of kinship care within ethnic groups in Wales

Prevalence of kinship care within different ethnic groups in 2011 are given in Table 3.

The highest prevalence of kinship care was seen within the black ethnic group. One in every 32 black children was growing up in the care of relatives. The lowest prevalence of kinship care was seen in the white ethnic group.

Overall, when compared with England, barring the other ethnic group, the prevalence of kinship care was higher in all ethnic groups in Wales.

Table 3. Estimated prevalence of children in kinship care within ethnic groups in Wales in 2011

Wales	Children living with relatives (N=9,430)	Prevalence of kinship care within ethnic group	Prevalence per 1000 children within ethnic group
Black	150	3.0%	30
Asian	390	2.1%	21
Mixed	280	2.1%	21
Other ethnic group	70	1.5%	16
White	8,540	1.5%	15

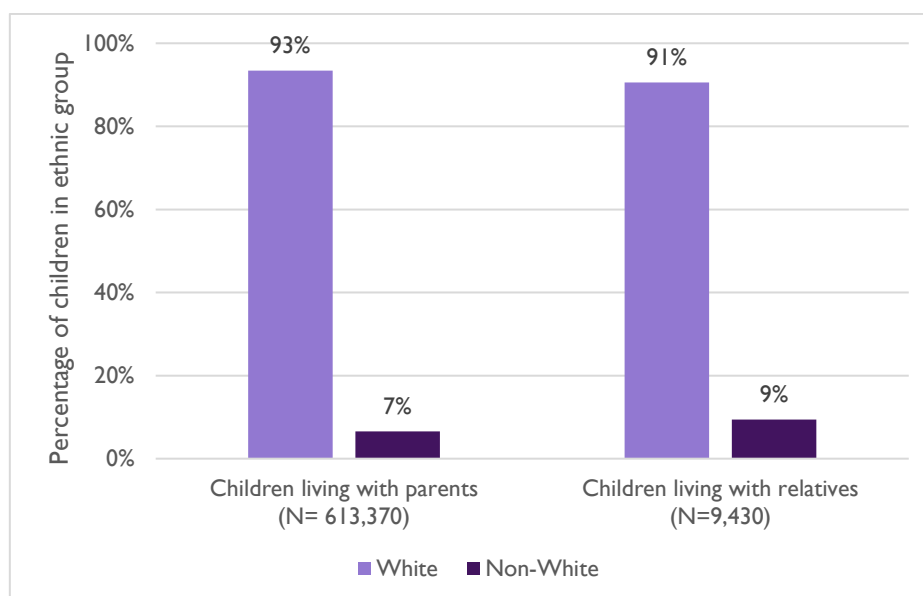
Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

Distribution of kinship care within ethnic groups in Wales

In contrast to England, where nearly a third (32%) of the children in kinship care were non-white, only 9% of children in kinship care in Wales were non-white (Figure 3). This may be attributable to the makeup of the child population of Wales, where an estimated 7% are non-white.

Kinship children in Wales were 1.5 times more likely to be non-white compared with children growing up with at least one parent¹.

Figure 3. The estimated ethnic distribution of children living in kinship care compared with children living with at least one parent in Wales in 2011



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

¹ $\chi^2(1)=122.65, p < .001, OR=1.47$

Long-term health problems and disability

The Census respondents were required to indicate whether the children had been affected by a long-term health condition or disability (which they had been affected by or expected to be affected by for at least 12 months) and to assess how their daily activities were affected by such a condition.

When compared with children who were growing up with at least one parent, children in kinship care in Wales were twice as likely to have a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities² (Table 4).

Table 4. Estimated distribution of long-term health problems and disability in kinship children compared with children living with at least one parent in Wales in 2011

	Children living with parents (N= 639,590)	Children living with relatives (N=10,220)
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	1.7%	3.3%
Day-to-day activities limited a little	2.4%	5.1%
Day-to-day activities not limited	95.9%	91.6%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

² $\chi^2(1)=426.42, p < .001, OR= 2.1$

Residence of children living in kinship care in England

The data were further explored to establish whether the children were usual residents in the UK; whether they were non-UK born, short-term residents; and whether they who lived away from home during term-time^{3,4}.

When compared with children who were growing up with at least one parent, there were significantly more kinship children who were living away at boarding school. A child in kinship care was 1.5 times more likely to be a student living away from home during term-time compared to a child who was growing up with at least one parent⁵.

There were also proportionately more kinship children who were non-UK born, short-term residents (Table 5). When compared with children who were growing up with at least one parent, children in kinship care were four times more likely to be a non-UK born, short-term resident⁶.

Table 5. Estimated distribution of the residence type of kinship children compared with children living with at least one parent in Wales in 2011

	Children living with parents (N= 618,930)	Children living with relatives (N=9,560)
Usual resident	99.0%	98.2%
Student living away from home during term-time	0.9%	1.4%
Non-UK born, short-term resident	0.1%	0.4%

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

³ A census short-term UK resident is anyone born outside of the UK who, on 27 March 2011, had stayed or intended to stay in the UK for a period of three months or more but less than 12 months.

⁴ These are exclusive categories used by the Office for National Statistics to differentiate between the groups in the population.

⁵ $\chi^2(1)=22.71, p < .001, OR=1.5$

⁶ $\chi^2(1)=98.87, p < .001, OR=4.2$

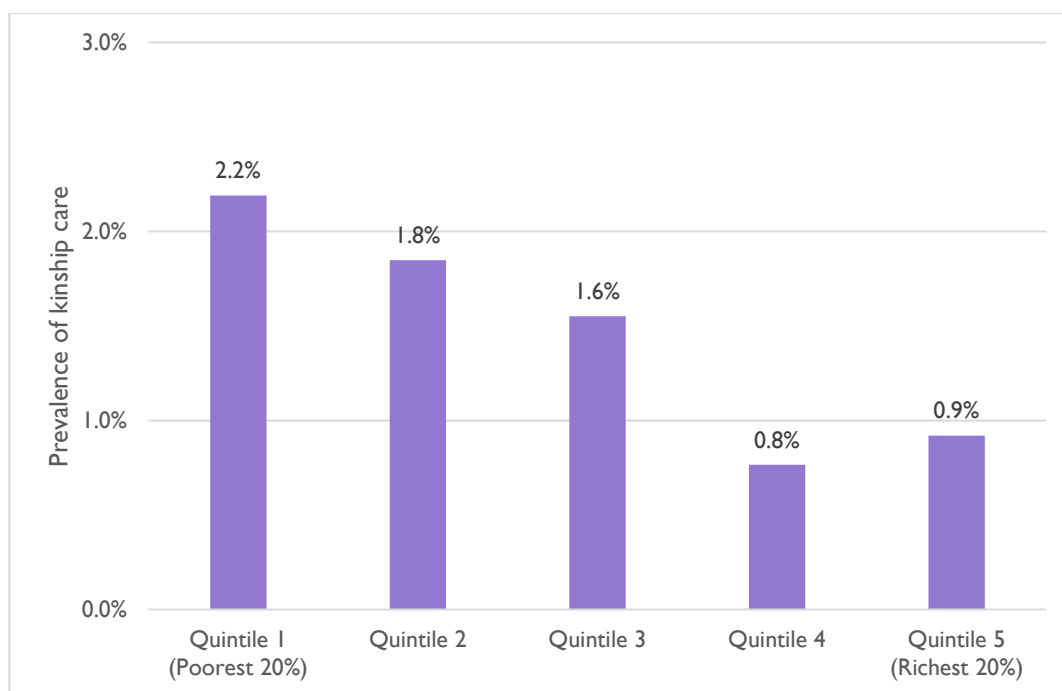
Prevalence of kinship care and poverty in Wales

Kinship care was more prevalent in poorer areas and less prevalent in richer areas. The highest prevalence of children living in kinship care was seen in the poorest 20% of areas in Wales (Figure 4).

One in every 46 children living in the poorest 20% of the areas (super output areas) in Wales was a child living in kinship care.

In the richest 20% of areas in Wales, only one in every 109 children was living in kinship care.

Figure 4. Estimated prevalence of kinship care by poverty (as defined by IMD⁷ income quintiles) in 2011



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

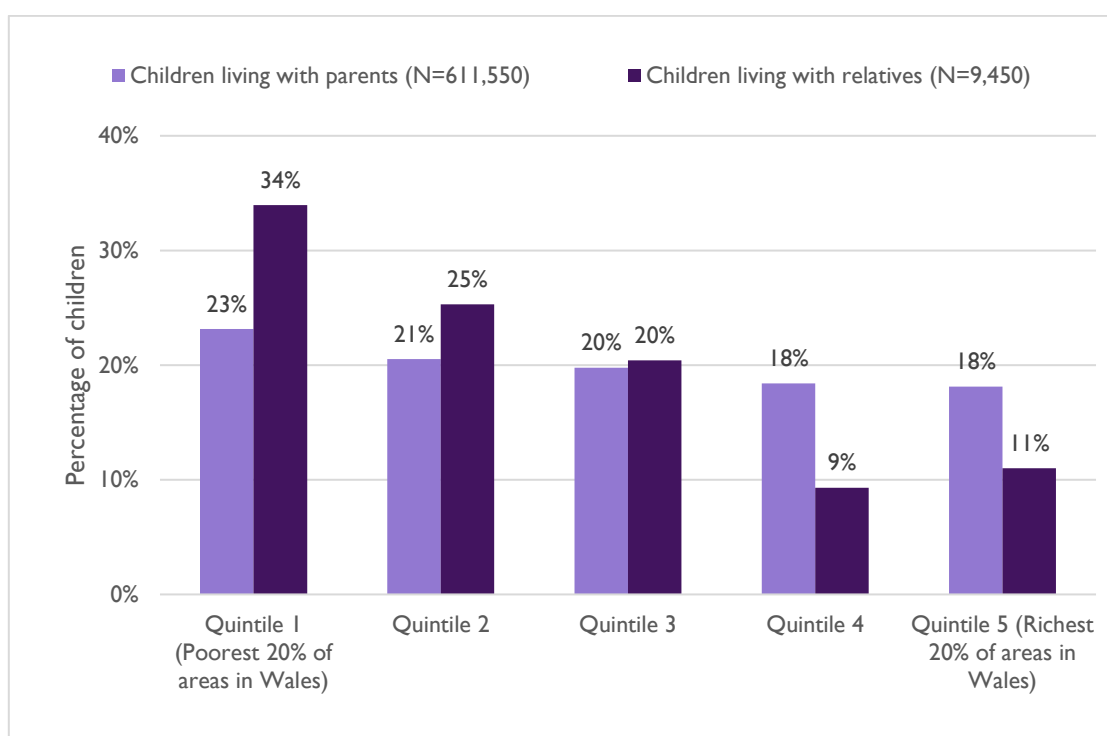
⁷ The index of multiple deprivation is a measure of deprivation at small area level (Noble et al., 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010) [4-7]. Welsh Index of multiple deprivation: <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation/Archive/WIMD-2011>

Distribution of kinship care and poverty in Wales

In Wales, more children living in kinship care were living in poorer areas compared with children who were growing up with at least one parent. A little more than a third (34%) of all children living in kinship care were living in households located in the 20% of the poorest areas (Figure 5).

In contrast, only around one in ten (11%) of kinship children lived in the most affluent 20% of areas in Wales, whilst nearly one in five (18%) of children living with parents were living in the most affluent areas.

Figure 5. Estimated prevalence of children in kinship care by area-level poverty, compared with children living with at least one parent in Wales in 2011 (as defined by IMD⁸ income quintiles)⁹



Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

⁸ The index of multiple deprivation is a measure of deprivation at small area level (Noble et al., 2000, 2004, 2007, 2010) [4-7]. Welsh Index of multiple deprivation: <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation/Archive/WIMD-2011>

⁹ The percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Prevalence of kinship care within deprived households in Wales

The 2011 data were further explored to see whether children living in kinship care were experiencing any household deprivation¹⁰ based on four selected household characteristics (employment; education; health and disability; and housing) as defined by the Office for National Statistics [7]¹¹.

The prevalence of kinship care was highest in households deprived on all four dimensions of employment, education, health and disability and housing in Wales (Figure 6).

In Wales, one in every 23 children living in households deprived in all four dimensions, was a child being cared for by a kinship carer.

The prevalence of kinship care was low in non-deprived households. Only one in 157 children in non-deprived households were growing up in kinship care.

The high prevalence of kinship children in the most deprived households indicate a pressing need for support and services to be provided to these children and their kinship families.

¹⁰ Poverty has been defined as lack of money or material possessions whilst deprivation has been defined as a lack of resources to escape from poverty [8].

¹¹ According to the 2011 Census, a household was classified as deprived if it met one or more of the following conditions [9]:

Employment: where any member of a household, who is not a full-time student, is either unemployed or long-term sick,

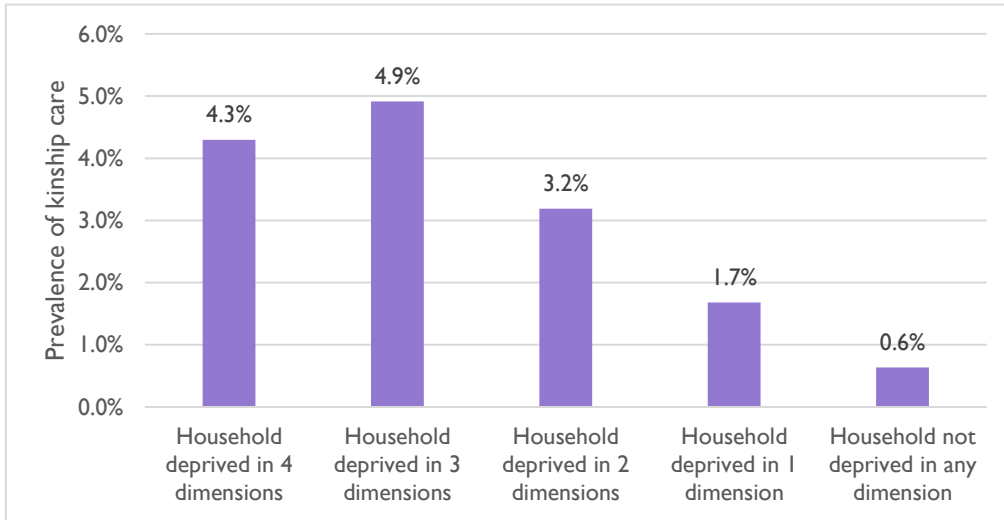
Education: no person in the household has at least level 2 education (see highest level of qualification), and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student,

Health and disability: any person in the household has general health that is “bad” or “very bad” or has a long term health problem,

Housing: the accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.

A household is classified as being deprived in none, or one to four of these dimensions in any combination.

Figure 6. Estimated prevalence of children in kinship care by household deprivation in Wales in 2011

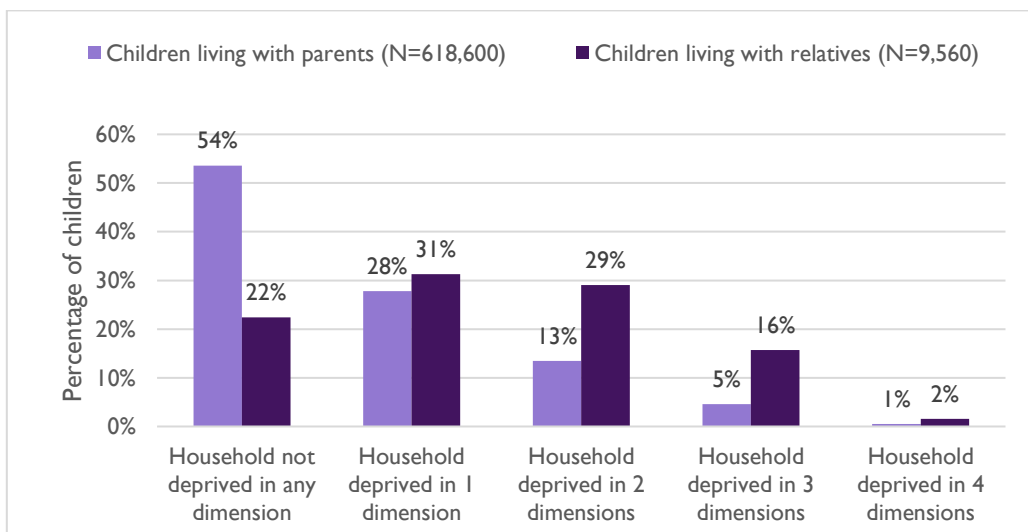


Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

Distribution of household deprivation in children living in kinship care in Wales

In 2011, more than three quarters (78%) of children living in kinship care were living in households deprived in at least one dimension (Figure 7). In contrast, less than half (46%) of the children living with at least one parent were affected by any household deprivation.

Figure 7. Estimated distribution of household deprivation for kinship children compared with children living with at least one parent in Wales in 2011¹²



¹² The percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

To join the mailing list, e-mail kinship-study@bristol.ac.uk or find the latest briefing papers on the project website www.bristolkinshipstudy.co.uk

REFERENCES

1. Wijedasa, D. The prevalence and characteristics of children growing up with relatives in the UK (Briefing paper 1): Characteristics of children living with relatives in England (Part 1). Bristol: University of Bristol; 2015.
2. ONS. NOMIS [Available from: www.nomisweb.co.uk].
3. Nandy S, Selwyn J, Farmer E, Vaisey P. Spotlight on Kinship Care: Using Census microdata to examine the extent and nature of kinship care in the UK at the turn of the Twentieth century. Bristol: University of Bristol; 2011.
4. Noble M, Smith GAN, Penhale B, Wright G, Dibben C, Owen T, et al. Measuring Multiple Deprivation at the Small Area Level: The Indices of Deprivation 2000. London; 2000.
5. Noble M, McLennan D, Wilkinson K, Whitworth A, Barnes H, Dibben CA. The English Indices of Deprivation 2007. London; 2008.
6. McLennan D, Barnes H, Noble M, Davies J, Garratt E, Dibben E. The English Indices of Deprivation 2010. London; 2011.
7. Noble M, Wright G, Dibben C, Smith GAN, McLennan D, Anttila C, et al. The English Indices of Deprivation 2004. London; 2004.
8. Townsend P. Deprivation. *Journal of Social Policy*. 1987;16:125-46.
9. Office for National Statistics. 2011 Census Glossary of Terms 2014.

**Appendix A. Estimated prevalence of children kinship care by local authority district
in Wales, 2011**

	Local Authority District	Number of children in kinship care	Prevalence of children in kinship care	Number of children in kinship care per 1000 children
W06000019	Blaenau Gwent	430	2.8%	28
W06000024	Merthyr Tydfil	320	2.5%	25
W06000020	Torfaen	390	1.9%	19
W06000012	Neath Port Talbot	510	1.9%	19
W06000016	Rhondda Cynon Taf	930	1.8%	18
W06000006	Wrexham	500	1.7%	17
W06000022	Newport	560	1.7%	17
W06000015	Cardiff	1150	1.6%	16
W06000010	Carmarthenshire	580	1.5%	15
W06000011	Swansea	710	1.5%	15
W06000009	Pembrokeshire	380	1.5%	15
W06000013	Bridgend	410	1.4%	14
W06000004	Denbighshire	270	1.4%	14
W06000018	Caerphilly	550	1.4%	14
W06000005	Flintshire	420	1.3%	13
W06000001	Isle of Anglesey	180	1.2%	12
W06000014	The Vale of Glamorgan	330	1.2%	12
W06000003	Conwy	250	1.2%	12
W06000002	Gwynedd	240	1.0%	10
W06000021	Monmouthshire	170	0.9%	9
W06000023	Powys	200	0.8%	8
W06000008	Ceredigion	80	0.7%	7

Source: ONS. Estimates calculated from 2011 Census Secure Microdata

NOTE.

Prevalence rates in red ink indicate that the local authority kinship child population prevalence rate is higher than the Welsh national prevalence rate for kinship care of 1.5%.



Dinithi Wijedasa

Hadley Centre for Adoption & Foster Care Studies

University of Bristol

+44 (0)117 954 6627

kinship-study@bristol.ac.uk

www.bristolkinshipstudy.co.uk