



What Works for
**Children's
Social Care**

HOW SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS WERE SELECTED, SCREENED AND REVIEWED FOR INCLUSION IN THE EVIDENCE STORE

How the systematic reviews were selected



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The first step for Cardiff was to do a scoping review to find out what was suitable for inclusion in the Evidence Store.

Between April 2018 and October 2018 our team carried out a scoping review. Its aim was to map the evidence base based on three research questions:

1. What is the nature and quantity of evidence for interventions that aim to safely reduce the number of children and young people entering statutory care?
2. What is the nature and quantity of evidence for interventions that aim to safely reduce the number of children and young people re-entering statutory care?
3. What is the nature and quantity of evidence for interventions that aim to safely increase the reunification of children and young people with their families following a period in out-of-home statutory care?

The review identified 17,578 individual studies, which were screened on title and abstract. Of these, 645 were screened at full text, and 170 were chosen as final included studies. 40 systematic reviews were passed on to the narrative summary team for further screening.

The second stage of identifying systematic reviews for the Evidence Store involved conducting a specific systematic search for systematic reviews of children and young people's social care. This was carried out by the Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE) at Cardiff University.

This involved searching 15 bibliographic databases and 18 websites. A comprehensive search strategy was designed, comprised of a range of medical subject headings and free text terms to describe children's social care and systematic reviews; the strategy was adapted for the other resources.

After removing duplicates, the searches identified 4,863 records. The records were screened by title and abstract. 593 records were selected for more detailed screening of the full-text against inclusion/ exclusion criteria. Of these, 88 articles were passed on to the narrative review summary team.

Then the following processes of screening and extraction took place for all identified reviews...

How the reviews were screened

Each abstract was screened independently by two researchers, with disagreements arbitrated by a third researcher where necessary. Screening included the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE) criteria, and some papers were excluded. The papers that met the inclusion criteria were prioritised according to how relevant they are to the sector. These were then moved on to the extraction process.

Applying transparent ratings

The remaining papers were reviewed using a database designed to extract key information in each area of the EMMIE framework (our standard of evidence), and apply transparent ratings for 'overall effectiveness' and 'strength of evidence'. This information was used to draft the technical summaries that you can see in "further resources" at the bottom of each intervention page.

The summaries were created by a team of researchers, and then reviewed within CASCADE (Children's Social Care and Research and Development Centre) by a senior sponsor. Peer review was also used in some cases if the topic was thought to be particularly high profile or controversial. The summaries were also shared with the intervention developers where appropriate.

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